

Theological Academy
from the A BRIEF *Book*
of the EXPOSITION

from OF THE *M. Cowie*
Prophecies

OF
Haggai, Zechariah and
Malachi.

BY
GEORGE HUTCHESON
Minister at
EDENBURGH.

EZRA 5. 2.

Then rose up Zerubbabel the sonne of Shealtiel, and Joshua the sonne of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the Prophets of God helping them.

2 PET. 1. 19.

We have also a more sure Word of Prophecie, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawne, and the day-star arise in your hearts.

April the 29th.

Imprimatur,
EDMUND CALAMY.

LONDON, Printed by T. R. and E. M. for Ralph Smith,
at the Bible in Cornhill near the Royal Exchange. 1654.

CHRISTIAN READER,

THe former Undertaking of this Reverend and learned Author, hath found so much acceptance, and hath been received with such a general Approbation, both by Ministers and other godly Christians, as that it hath emboldened him to make a further Essay in the same kinde. This ensuing Treatise presents to thy view a brief Explication of, and choice Observations upon three other of the Lesser Prophets. All that I shall say to encourage thee to reade it, is, That it is written by the same *Master Hutcheson*, that it is as elaborate and as useful as the former, that it will fully satisfie expectation, and tend much to thy spiritual edification.

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WILLIAMSON

OF THE

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AND

GEORGE WILLIAMSON

EDINBURGH

Printed by James Ballantyne, Edinburgh.

EDINBURGH

LONDON: Printed by J. Ballantyne, at the Royal Exchange, 1824.



To the Right Honourable

J O H N

EARLE of

Cassillis,

LORD KENNEDY, &c.

Grace, Mercy and Peace, through
Jesus Christ be multiplied.

Right Honourable,



Such is the tender kindnesse and rich
bounty of our all-sufficient and gra-
cious God to his Church and people,
whom he hath chesen from among
the lost posterity of *Adam*, as that
in wrath he still remembreth mercy; and when his
dispensations seem to speak greatest displeasure,
and to render them most miserable: yet upon se-
rious consideration they will finde cause to say, that
he is good, and his mercy endureth for ever. He doth

See Page 24 Marshall Brand

The Epistle Dedicatory.

not deny to them the sure mercies of *David*, when or wise reasons he cuts short their outward delights, and their afflictions when they need them, are taken in as Articles and Priviledges of his unchangeable Covenant with them, *Psal.* 89. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34.

In particular, it is a mercy never enough acknowledged, that the Lord vouchsafes upon his people his Word written in holy Scriptures, which as it was a special favour to *Israel* of old, *Psal.* 147. 19, 20. so the riches thereof, and the advantages to be had thereby are not soon pondered; for herein is held forth the true and saving knowledge of God, and an impartial discovery of our selves; herein we have the offer of the salvation purchased by Christ, and by it is the infallible way of attaining true happiness pointed out. It is to the Word we are directed by the righteousness of faith, to know the minde of God concerning lost sinners, *Rom.* 10. 6, 7, 8. It is the Word the Lord employes to be the seed of regeneration, and which the regenerate man should esteem more then his necessary food, for promoting his growth: By the Word the Lord doth quicken his people when they are dead, reclaim them when they are wandering, comfort them when they are afflicted, and point out their way unto them. Hereby we are directed to try the spirits, when delusions are aloft, and Satan is transformed into an Angel of light. By the light thereof we may infallibly know what is right, and what is wrong in the world, when all things are to sense wrapped up in clouds and mists, and may know what to think of sad times and lots, and what issue

The Epistle Dedicatory.

to expect of them. And in a word, the Scriptures are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

As this great and inestimable favour ought to engage all Christians to be much in searching the Scriptures, and conversant with God speaking therein, (especially in times when the Lord's letting out many strong delusions, proclaims our negligence, and not receiving the love of the truth; and when his chastisements call on us to seek teaching out of his Law.) And as it doth call on Ministers in their publick stations, to be instant in season and out of season, inculcating this Word of truth: so it hath invited me to essay how I might be instrumental, through the Lords assistance and blessing, in opening up some parts of this Charter, for the more general use and help of the Lords people: And having met with such acceptance of my former Essay, as hath encouraged me to make this further progresse, upon these three last of the Lesser Prophets; I do humbly crave leave to present it to the world under your Lordships Honourable name, who have obtained mercy of the Lord, to taste that he is gracious, as is daily evidenced by your desiring the sincere milk of the Word, and by your cordial resolution and sincere endeavour to cleave to the Law and Testimony, and follow the revealed Will of God in your wayes. Which as it hath made your Lordship precious in the hearts of the godly who know you; so I judge my self bound in a special way, to take hold of this opportunity to expresse my sense
of

The Epistle Dedicatory.

of the same, who have had more frequent occasion for many yeares, (both during my service in the Ministry in that part of the countrey, where your Lordships interest and residence is, and since my removal from thence) to be a witness and observer of the grace of God in you, and have met with such undeserved respects, for the truthe cause, from your Lordship, as requires a more worthy testimony and acknowledgement of my obligations, and bound dutie to honour you, then is this piece, as to what is my part in it. Yet such as it is, I make bold to offer it to your Lordship, and being an Exposition of holy Scriptures, and of such places, as do hold forth much of the Lords minde, concerning his publick work, and state of his Church; I hope it shall not be unacceptable to your Lordship, whose care and diligence in seeking light from God, and cleaving to it, and whose following the publick work of God in singlenesse of heart, (even to the prejudice of your particular interest) hath convinced and put to silence, even such as were enemies thereunto.

I shall not insist on this subject, which I know your Lordship takes no pleasure to hear of, nor is it my way to dwell much upon; nor shall I trouble your Lordship with any account concerning my part in this work; only this I may say, that the subject-matter is divine; being a part of that light which shined in a dark place in the dayes of the Old Testament; many passages thereof need an Interpreter and threed of Exposition as much as any, and the doctrine therein contained is useful for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.

We

The Epistle Dedicatory.

We may reade herein the true causes of *Judahs* captivity, the ill use they made of deliverance, which drew new plagues upon them out of Gods hand, and their conceit of external performances, when yet they neglected the weighty matters of the Law. We will finde God so reproving them for sin, as yet encouraging them to duty, and richly comforting them when they are engaged in it; we will see them declining after a reformation, and this to be the cause of the many calamities that ensued. We will also finde here many sweet Predictions concerning the Messiah, in the accomplishment whereof, the Gospel-Church ought to rejoyce, and predictions concerning the various dispensations of God toward his ancient people the Jewes; partly, in their rejection and dispersion after the coming of the Messiah, in the accomplishment whereof, we should reade the severity of God; and partly, in their future conversion and recollection, which we should be much in prayer to God for, that he would hasten it. These and many other precious truths, are expressed in these Prophecies, and briefly hinted at in the Exposition and Notes: Which that they may prove useful to the Church of God, and in particular to your Lordship, is the prayer of

My Lord,

*Your Lordships obliged Servant
in the Gospel,*

GEO. HUTCHESON.

GEO. H. BROWN



TO THE
Reader.

Christian Reader,



Hy Acceptance of my former endeavours upon some of the Lesser Prophets, hath encouraged me to go on in this work, and to offer unto thee also this Exposition of these three Prophets who lived in the Church of the Jewes, after their return from the captivity of Babylon. My aime and desire herein hath been, and is the promoving of thy spiritual good, by holding forth, as briefly as I could, the sense and use of this part of Holy Writing; And I desire that accordingly, thy care may be to make right use of this, as of other meanes which God in these times (notwithstanding the thick clouds of errors and delusion that now abound) offereth unto thee. And that it may be so, it is requisite that thy scope in reading be not

To the Reader.

to satisfie curiosity, or to judge of mens abilities and parts in accomplishing what they undertake, (which is the most that many in this nauseating and wanton age propound to themselves in reading) but that thou be one, who indeed art making earnest in working out thy own salvation, and of honouring God in thy station and generation; In which case only the Scriptures will relish with thee, as being driven thereunto, for reproofe, consolation and direction as thou needs them. Nor is it to be expected, that what is here gathered from the Scripture, and presented to thy view, will have due weight, till first thou learne in thy heart to magnifie the truth, and certainty of the written Word, and see God, who cannot lie, speaking to thee in it, and by it, and then thou may discern much more in it, and in every sentence of it, then our weaknesse can dip into or comprehend, and that thou art bound to deny thy self, thy corrupt sense and reason, and simply trust God speaking in it, blessing him for so sure a ground whereupon thy soule may leane its weight. I shall adde nothing concerning this peece in particular, wherein are expounded many dark places, by the obscurity whereof the Lord would exercise and humble us, and
the

To the Reader.

the subject whereof is of use to the Church, under variety of conditions and revolutions. Only recommending it to thy favourable acceptance, and thy self in making use of it, to the Lords blessing, who teacheth his people to profit. I am

Thine to serve thee in
the Gospel,

GEO. HUTCHESON.

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A BRIEF
 EXPLICATION
 OF THE
 Prophecies
 OF
 Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

Haggai.

THE ARGUMENT.



His Prophet with the two that follow, were sent of God unto the people of the Jews, after their return from the captivity in Babylon. We read not of any Prophets they had immediately after their return, but after that they had (by reason of much opposition from without, and their own weakness) shamefully neglected the building of the Temple, Ezra 4. 23, 24. The Lord, who had inflicted several plagues on them for this, did also stir up first this Prophet and

B

shortly

Shortly after Zechariah, to rouse up the people, and be helpful to them in building of the Temple, Ezra 5. 1, 2. And they sent Malachi 1st of 2d, to reprove and correct the abuses that fell out amongst them, after the Temple was built. Haggai being the first sent out, is employed, partly to reprove their following their own interests, and neglecting of the work of God, and to stir up that secure people to the work; partly, to encourage them to go on, and to do it honestly being set about it; In which Zechariah chiefly joyes with him, and enlarges that subject of their encouragement.

CHAP. I.

IN this Chapter, (after the Inscription, v. 1.) we have 1. A Sermon reproving the peoples sinful negligence, and stirring them up to build the Temple: wherein he reproves their shuffling, and put hand to this work, as if the time of doing it were not come; whereas they were most active in their own private affaires, v. 2, 3, 4. And exhorts them seriously to consider their condition, and for what God had so smitten them, v. 5, 6. and so to consider as to be stirred up to set to the work of the Temple, in which God would shew himself gracious, v. 7, 8. and the neglect whereof had been the cause of so many plagues, v. 9, 10, 11. 2. We have the successe of this doctrine, all of them fearing God who spake by his Word, set to the work, v. 12. and being encouraged by the Prophet in so doing, v. 13. they are so active, as in short time they have materials ready, wherewith they begin the work, v. 14, 15.

Verf. 1. **I**N the second yeare of Darius the King, in the sixth moneth, in the first day of the moneth, came the Word of the LORD, by Haggai the Prophet unto Zerubbabel the sonne of Shealtiel, Governor of Judah, and to Joshua the sonne of Josheph the High Priest, saying,

In the Inscription we have not only the Author and Penman of this Prophecie, but the time of it reckoned from the years of the Persⁿ Kings reign, under whose power now they were; and the month designed, which was the time of their harvest; (the Feast of Tabernacles being the fifteenth day of the next month. See, *Eze.* 43. 15, 33, 34.) and the persons to whom it is directed, which were *Zerubbabel*, the Civil Governour; (who seems to have been the natural sonne of *Pedajah*, *1 Chron.* 3. 19. and the legal sonne of *Shealtiel* or *Salathiel*, as succeeding him in the Government though not now kingly; or *Shealtiel* was his Grandfather, and *Pedajah* his father,) and *Joshua* the High Priest, whose father had gone into captivity, *1 Chron.* 6. 15. The message is directed to them, not as chief in the guilt, (being godly men) but that bearing rule they might stir up themselves, and help to excite others, omitting what hath been observed on former Inscriptions; *We may learn hence*;

1. Whenever men may think of Gods threatenings when they are in prosperity, and of his promises when they are in adversity, yet time will prove the truth of both in experience; as here it is supposed, notwithstanding this peoples presumption while they stood a Kingdome, and their fainting in captivity, yet they had both been sent into captivity, as the Prophets had forewarned them, and were brought back again according to Gods promise. 2. When the Lord hath delivered his people from the outward captivity wherein they were held, he may see it fit to keep them yet in a low and poore estate, that they may yet repent of their sins, which neither before nor in their captivity, have been seriously laid to heart, and may be kept from soaring on much external glory, but be held eyeing that which is the true spiritual glory of the Church; for these ends are the Jewes when returned yet under *Darius the King*, their time reckoned by the yeares of his reigne, as a token of their subjection; and have only a Governour and High Priest of their own, in stead of the Kingly dignity they formerly enjoyed. 3. As the Lord in mercy toward his people, sweeteneth their sad times by sending messengers unto them, as a meane and token of good: so it is an encouragement to his servants to go on in their duty in most desperate times, when they consider that his blessing upon the endeavours of a preaching Ministry, may be effectual to help forward his work speedily, which, without this had lien long behinde; for here the Word of the Lord

came by Haggai to them, and that in the second yeare of Darius. Now the work was finished in his sixth yeare, Ezra 6. 15. which being fourty six yeares in building, John 2. 20, gives us to understand that by his and Zecharihs help, (as they are called helpers, Ezra 5. 2.) the work went faster on in some yeares, then in fourty two yeares before; yea, when it had been laid by so long before. 4. As it is the duty of faithful Watchmen, to be instant in season and out of season, so especially to take advantage of afflictions on sinful people, to see how the rod may help the Word to work: therefore came the Word of the Lord in the sixth month, that their scarce harvest (as is marked, v. 6.) might excite them to consider Gods Word. 5. It is the duty of men in highest power to submit to what God saith in his Word, and to be active also that the Word of God have place amongst others, where they have power; and that Rulers in Church and State concur to see this work carried on; for these causes, came the Word of the Lord by Haggai unto Zerubbabel and to Joshu.

Verf. 2. *Thus speaketh the Lord of Hostes, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORDS house should be built.*

3. *Then came the Word of the LORD by Haggai the Prophet, saying,*

4. *Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your sieled houses, and this house lie waste?*

That the Lord may reprove their negligence in building the Temple, he propounds their pretences whereby they thought to justify themselves, to wit, that finding many lets and impediments from the Kings of Persia, and many difficulties from themselves, they neither pretend to unwillingnesse, nor yet professe misbelief but that it will be built; only (however the seventy yeares of their captivity were expired) they pretend that Gods time was not come, wherein they should meet with no rubs, and might be able to build it more stately, and so pretended to a quiesce in Gods secret Will and Providence, looking for better times. This the Lord refutes from their own practice, who did admit of no such excuse in their own affaires, but

but notwithstanding all difficulties and vexations: every one builded stately houses to themselves, and how much more might all of them build an house unto the Lord? *Doll.* 1. It is a fearful though usual sin in the Church, when that which is the principal fruit and end of all their deliverances, and a chief meanes of their happinesse, and which they seemed to esteem most of when they wanted it, is most neglected when they are delivered, and have occasion to testifie their affection and thankfulness, such was the building of the Temple to this people; and yet this *house* *lies waste.* 2. It is a most dangerous way of sinning, when the sinner pretends affliction to God when he wrongs him and his matters most, and when he thinks himself able by faire pretences to excuse, if not to justify his way; so did this people sin, alledging no disaffection, but that *the time is not come, &c.* 3. As the Lord may permit very great obstructions to be laid in the way of a work, which yet he will carry on: (as was seen in this Temple, which took forty six yeares, ere it could be gotten perfect :) so a people, who do not openly disaffect the work, may sinfully concur in obstructing of it, as the Jewes do here; And namely, 1. When they are not sensible of obstructions in the way, but are soon hindered; for so much speaks their senselesse submission in this particular. 2. When they neglect or passe from a known duty upon any pretence of Providence, or of Gods secret will: as here they leave off a commanded duty, alledging that Godstime was not come. 3. When they are hindered from their duty in advancing the Work of God by any hazard whatsoever, if it were even by the command of misinformed authority, especially when they have clear law for what they do, as well as Gods command; for this was their fault, that they were hindered by *artaxerxes* letter, *Ezra* 4. 23, 24. when they had *Cyrus* decree standing for them, which *Darius* sustaines, *Ezra* 6. 2, &c. when they were challenged for building without a new warrant. 4. When they look for times wherein there shall be no difficulties, but all advantages for doing Gods work in, and in expectation of such times do lie by from present duty; because their times were not such: they say, *The time is not come*; wheress his work goeth on in the midst of disadvantages, *Dan.* 9. 25. 5. When the true cause of mens negligence, which layeth many a lion in the way, is their love to their own things and private interests, carrying their spirits of publick matters and the things of God;

and all that men say beside, are but pretences to hide their shame; so much doth the Lord discover in their dwelling in sinned houses; when his house lay waste. *Psalm 4* Mans own consciences, when they speak impartially, will convince them of heinous sin, when they study to promote their own interests, who are but wormes, with the neglect of the great Gods affairs, when they are sooner laid by in his matters then their own: when they can get time for their own affairs, and will not stand at any difficulty, but no time for Gods work; and every more there is a mountain; when they care little how it be with Gods house, so their own house prosper, and when they can live in pomp and ease, and make a good life for themselves in an ill time, and let Gods work lie in the dust, as that they can do nothing for, nor are sensible of, nor challenged for any neglect about it. This is imported in that pinching question: *Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your sinned houses, and this house lie waste?* that is, can you finde a time and opportunity to raise your selves to such state, who are poor crawling wormes, and yet finde none so much as to raise the house of the great God out of the ruines thereof, and not be challenged? 5. A peoples sinful negligence in Gods matters (especially having received many favours from him) though times were never so perillous, renders them contemptible, whatever their priviledges be, and provokes God to bring them down to know themselves better; therefore he styles them, *This (not my) peoples* and *O ye, to wit, base wormes* for whom I have done so much. 6. As God would be seen the sinners Party, in discovering and reprovng of sin; so a light of his Majesty and Power, who hath all things in his command to employ as his army, may terrifie the secure and negligent, and promise sufficient protection to the willing doers of their duty, in times of great hazard, from Tyrants and Oppressors. Therefore is his authority prefixed, both to the challenge and discovery of their sin, *Thus speaketh the Lord*; and to the re-lucation, *Then came the Word of the Lord*, &c. and he is designed the Lord of Hostes, able to crush them persisting in their sin, and able to protect them in their duty against all their ill neighbours.

Verf. 5. Now therefore, thus saith the LORD of Hostes, Consider your ways.

6. *Ye have sown much, and bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but there is none warme: and he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.*

Having thus reprov'd their sinful negligence, he exhorts to a serious consideration of their course, and of their ingratitude, prophanity and carelesse in this matter, that it might be amended, especially considering the hand of God upon them, and that they were lying under some of the visible curses of the Law, *Deut. 28*. Either the earth denied them increase, or God took away the blessing, that they were neither fed nor clothed by it, and the fruit of their labours were put in a bottomlesse bag, all which could not be without some cause, which they were to search out, and lay to heart and amend. *Doct. 1.* A chief cause of a peoples going wrong, and continuing wrong, is the want of a serious examination of themselves, to know how it is with them, and the want of a serious pondering and laying to heart of the sinfulness of these courses, which otherwise they are not simply ignorant of; therefore here he exhorts them, to this sovereign remedy; *Consider your wayes, or, set your hearts upon your wayes.* 2. God hath the fruit of the earth, and of mens labours, and the blessing of what they have, so absolutely in his hands, as that he can when he pleases take them away, can make a mans riches not to consist in the abundance of what he possesseth; and will take them away when his people hunt after these things, neglecting better; for herein he would have his hand seen; *Ye have sown much, and bring in little, ye eat, but ye have not enough, &c.* 3. When the Word of the Lord doth not discover effectually mens sinful wayes unto them, the Lord useth to send affliction to put them upon a search, and when rods are lying on, and God is executing his threatened curses, it calls aloud to secure sinners, to make enquiry into themselves, that they may be humbled and amend their faults; *Thus saith the Lord of Hostes, Consider your wayes: ye have sown much, &c.*

Verf. 7. *Thus saith the LORD of hostes, Consider your wayes.*

8. *Go up to the mountain, and bring wood and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD.*

He exhorts them yet again to consider their wayes, and (that they might testifie their reality herein) to bring forth the fruit thereof, by obeying the Command of God, and going speedily to provide timber from *Lebanon*, and materials to build the Temple: To which he subjoynes this encouragement, that according to his promise made, concerning the first Temple, and *Solomon's prayer*, *1 Kings 8. 28. 29.* He would take pleasure to shew himself gracious therein, as in his resting place, and would be glorified by his peoples service there, by his appearing gloriously for them from thence, and by getting praise from his people for the gracious answering of them in their need. *Doff. 1.* Self-examination is a duty from which men are naturally averse, and a duty which is not often done to any good purpose, or so as from through conviction of conscience they subscribe themselves guilty of what the Word challenges for, which yet is necessary for a right reformation of abuses: therefore it is pressed again and again, *Consider your wayes. 2.* As the Lord doth not approve of amendment of faults, without a serious laying to heart of former doings; so kindly convictions will not die out, nor let the convinced sinner alone, till it appear in fruits of outward obedience: for these two are joyned together; *Consider your wayes, and go up to the mountain, and bring wood. 3.* It is the Will of God, that his people, as they be careful to have their own souls, and every one within their charge in a right way, so especially to have the publick work and service of God, wherein all are concerned, set on foot and kept up: for this was in part, the meaning and use of this Ceremonial Temple, to be a place for Gods publick worship, concerning which all are commanded: *Go up to the mountain, bring wood and build the house. 4.* Where God evidenceth his presence among a people, by setting up his Tabernacle, and publick worship among them, and makes them active in promoting the same, it is a pledge that he will not abhor them, but make his presence known by gracious acts, that he will let out proofs of his glory there, accept their service as glory given to him, and give them frequent occasion of glory.

CHAP. I. Prophecie of HAGGAI. 9

glorifying him; for, *Build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.* 5. It may be a great encouragement to the Church, to do service, that the all-sufficient Lord should condescend to accept any service they can do, or own and take pleasure in them or it; for, so doth the Lord encourage: *Build the house, and I will take pleasure in it,* that is, your service shall be owned, I will dwell in that which ye build; See, 1 Chron. 29. 14. 1 Kings 8. 27.

Verf. 9. Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little: and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it: Why saith the Lord of Hostes? because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man to his owne house.

10. *Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.*

11. *And I called for a drougt upon the land, and upon the mountaines, and upon the corne, and upon the new wine, and upon the oile, and upon that which the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon cattel, and upon all the labour of the hands.*

To stir them up yet more effectually to the work, he again layeth before them the evidences of Gods anger against them, in disappointing their hopes of the harvest, and not blessing what they had gathered in, and all because there was no care had of the Temple and publick worship of God, but all sought their own things, v. 9. for which cause God had remarkably smitten them, making the heavens to deny dew, and the earth to deny fruit, v. 10. for the drougt had not only destroyed the fruit of all kindes, and made all mens endeavours uselesse, but he had made men and beasts feel it also, by want of drink and food, and by diseases which such a season occasions, v. 11. *Doct.* 1. Even rods when they are sent on do not soon work, nor speak Gods minde to an afflicted people to any purpose; therefore here the observation and use of their rod is again inculcate. 2. When the Lord is provoked, he can not only send an affliction, but so order it, by faire appearances of a better lot,

lot, and heightening of the sinners expectation and desire, as
 may make it most sad: *Ye looked for much, and do it came to
 little.* 3. Sinners are never a whit the nearer contentment and
 happiness, that they have these things which usually men take for
 their portion of happiness: for by withdrawing a blessing God
 can make it all one, as if they had them not: *And when ye
 brought it home, I did blow upon it.* 4. Though impenitent sin-
 ners, having felt some strokes, may readily, because of that, ex-
 pect exemption for the future; yet it is righteous with God to
 pursue them with rod upon rod, till they be compleatly mise-
 rable, unless they return; for, it is not enough, that the great
 harvest they expected came to little; but that little is blasted: *I
 did blow upon it.* 5. As when the Lord strikes his owne
 people, there must be some special and remarkable cause to be
 sought out; so the stupidity of a stricken people, is ordinarily
 so great, that they can neither search nor finde it out, till
 God discover it: this question, *Why, saith the Lord of Hostes?*
 doth not import any ignorance in him; but that it was their
 duty to search the cause, and yet could not finde it out without
 his light. 6. The true cause of the Church and Professors,
 their ill thriving in the world, is, that their care of these
 things takes them up from minding Gods work and matters;
 and that they are taken up with the worst things, neglecting the
 best: thus to seek to gaine is indeed to lose, for zeal for the pub-
 lick and work of God, is the compendious way to prosper in
 our private affairs: this is the true cause of their want; *Be-
 cause of my house that is waste, and ye run every man to his own
 house.* 7. It is useful for secure sinners, being afflicted by God,
 to take a serious view of the rods upon them; that they may
 see more of the bitter fruits of sin, then can be discerned at
 first: therefore doth the Lord repeat and enlarge the sight of
 their stroke, v. 10, 11, that therein they might see God provo-
 ked to be their Party in whose favour their life stood: *I called
 for a drought: that they might see all the creatures armed, and
 ready to execute Gods quarrel for sin: Heaven stayed from dew,
 and the earth from fruit, both conspiring the sinners ruine; that
 they might see mans frailty, (however he be oft-times stout a-
 gainst God) in that there is no need of striking him immedi-
 ately, but take away one of many drops from him, and he is
 gone, stay but the heavens from dew, and the earth from raine
 and fruit, and man will smart for all; that they might see that
 vengeance.*

vengeance pursuing sin, will cut a man short of all his contents and refuges on all hands, will blast a land and all the fruits of it, will smite man and beast, and all his labour, v. 11. and in a word, the afflicted sinner may see that it is great folly to provoke the Lord to jealousy, and that there is no safety, but in being reconciled with God, and setting about duty.

Verſ. 12. *Then Zerubbabel the ſonne of Shealtiel, and Joſuah the ſonne of Joſedech the High Prieſt, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the Prophet, (as the LORD their God had ſent him) and the people did feare before the LORD.*

The fruit and ſucceſſe of this doctrine is recorded, that the Rulers and remnant of the Jewes, who were left of the preceding ſore judgements, or who had returned from captivity, did acknowledge the voice of God in the mouth of his ſervant, though there had been no Prophet ſent of a long time before; and out of the ſenſe of their guilt, and juſtneſſe of Gods judgements, did ſtand in awe of God ſpeaking to them, and did ſubmit to the Command, and go to work. *Verſ. 1.* The Word of God in the mouth of his ſervants will not take effect till his authority be ſeen and acknowledged in it, and his ſervants looked on as coming in his Name; for here they look on this meſſage, as the voice of the Lord, and the words of Haggai as the Lord had ſent him, that is, that the Lords voice was in his Word whom he had ſent. 2. It will be a notable meanes to make the Word effectual, when beſide the abſolute authority of God, ſpeaking in his Word, his intereſt in his people is conſidered and believed by them, and that he who ſpeaks, and re- proves, and directs, is their Confederate God, whom they ſhould be loath to offend or diſobey, ſo much the rather as his relation ſtands, notwithstanding their faults, for, thus is the Lord named here, *The Lord their God.* 3. When God is ſeen ſpeaking in his Word as a Parry to the ſinner, and when his love is believed for all that, even in his reprov- ing it will make the guilty and ſmit- ten ſinner, to ſtand in much awe, will both break and melt him, and will make him look on his former wayes, wherein he hath been ſecure, with much affrightment and hor- rour; for the fruit

fruit of the former is; *And the people feared before the Lord.*
 4. When the awe of God, speaking in his Word, in his Majesty and goodness, hath had place in the heart, it will put men to give obedience in some measure to what is commanded; for, the people in this temper obeyed the voice of the Lord.
 5. It is a sweet and blessed like case, when men in power are patternes and encouragements unto others, in submitting to the Word of the Lord in the mouth of his servants; and when a peoples affliction doth not hinder their respect to the Commandments, as here is marked: that Zerubbabel and Joshua first, and then all the remnant of the people obeyed. 6. It may encourage the servants of God to go on in their work, when they consider what a great blessing God can, and sometime doth give to their endeavours beyond all probability: for here, by one Sermon, all the people are set about a long neglected work, in the midst of many difficulties.

Verf. 13. Then spake Haggai the LORDS Messenger, in the LORDS message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the LORD.

Upon the peoples obedience, the Prophet is sent out to testify and assure them of Gods approbation and presence with them: which message he delivers confidently, to encourage them against any sense of their former guilt and rods lying on; and against the feare of any opposition from enemies without, as the history tells us they met with, *Ezra 5. 1, 2.* with 3. *Dan. 1.* Albeit a people formerly negligent, might in justice expect many bitter dayes, even after they have amended their faults; yet such is the Lords tender care of his truly humbled people, that he allows them to begin their work with encouragement; for, when they feare and obey, *Then spake Haggai, &c.* 2. As the people of God no looner put hand to any work of his, but they are environed with so many difficulties within and without, that they will need to fetch their encouragement from God only, so the Lords peace and approbation, his presence, blessing and assistance, which he assuredly gives his own people in his way, is sufficient to bear out in hardest service: in opposition to all they could meet with, this assurance is given; *I am with you, saith the Lord.* 3. It helps much to lean our weight on

on promises, when we are much about the study of the divine authority of the Word, as also when we look upon the confidence of his servants, in carrying the message, who do believe and then speak; therefore is the Prophets authority again repeated, and his Commission to deliver this message in particular, together with his confident speaking of it, as being persuaded of the truth of what he said, and now encouraged and confirmed by the successe of his former doctrine. *Then spake Haggai the Lords messenger in the Lords message, saying, &c.*

Verf. 14. And the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel, the sonne of Shealtiel, governour of Judah, and the spirit of Jeshuah the sonne of Josedech the High-Priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came and did work in the house of the LORD of hostes their God.

15. In the foure and twentjeth day of the sixth moneth, in the second yeare of Darius the King.

The fruit of all his doctrine, especially of the last encouragement, is again recorded, to wit, that the Lord effectually stirred up, by the Ministry of his servant, both the Rulers and People, so that within twenty three dayes after his beginning to preach, (as may be seen from v. 15. compared with v. 1.) every one in his station is about the work, having not only provided materials, but are at work in the house, at least making ready for building, as we gather from *ch. 2. 10, 15, 18. Dist. 1.* Albeit obedience unto God will not want its own commendation, and reward in the obeyer; yet the glory of our obedience is due to God only, who is the first mover in it; therefore to clear how they came to obey his voice, it is said, *the Lord stirred up their spirits.* 2. However choicest of men or people considered in themselves, or being left of God, will prove base and unable; and unwilling for any good work; yet when the meanest are set on work by God, they will be courageous to undertake, and able to effectuate great things; for when God *stirred up the spirits*, of that seemingly despicable people. *They came and did work in the house of the Lord*, which was an enterprile full of hazard. 3. As it is the honour of the greatest to be employed

ployed in Gods work; so, howeuer all cannot attain to like eminencie in it, yet the meaneſt endeavour of the meanest person, will be marked and taken notice of by God: therefore are Zerubbabel and Jospha about the work, and yet not only they, but all the remanues coming and working, is remarked. 4. It is necessary for our enabling to duty, to joyne encouragement with convictions, and especially to have assurance of our interest in God, and faith in his Power and Omnipotencie; therefore upon the encouragement, v. 13. *Their spirits were stirred up;* and it is said, *they did work in the house of the Lord of hostes their God.* 5. This speedy successe of the Prophets Ministry in a work of so great difficultie, and which had lien so long neglected, as it testifies how willing the Lord can make his people in the day of his power, so it may leaue sad convictions upon many, who have been deale with by the Word for more yeares, then Haggai had dayes to deale with this people, and yet were never stirred up to any good, or acceptable work, tending to Gods honour, or advancement of their owne salvation.

CHAP. II.

THE people being set on work at Gods Command to build the Temple, the Prophet is sent forth to declare further of Gods minde unto them in a threefold Sermon. The scope of the first Sermon is to be an antidote against the peoples discouragement, taken from the meannesse of the work they were about, v. 1, 2, 3. and to encourage them notwithstanding to go on with it, by arguments taken from his presence, according to the standing Covenant, v. 4, 5. and by a promise of Christs coming in the flesh, to fill that house with glory, v. 6, 7. which should make up the want of any outward splendor which God could easily furnish, v. 8. yea, and should make it to transcend the first Temple in glory, v. 9. The scope of the second Sermon is, 1. To exhort them who were employed in so holy a work, to consider their former sin in neglecting of it, and to do it purely, lest they polluted it as to themselves: which is propounded in two cases; v. 10, 11, 12, 13. and applied, v. 14. 2. To encourage

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courage them yet to do the work in expectation of a blessing, and of Gods change of his outward dealing, which heretofore had been sad, v. 15, 16, 17. but from that day should be better, v. 18, 19. The third Sermon is directed to Zerubbabel as the type, promising stability to that people in the midst of all commotions; and to Christ as the Anti-type, holding out the stability and enlargement of his Kingdome, v. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Verf. 1. **I**N the seventh moneth, in the one and twentieth day of the moneth, came the Word of the LORD by the Prophet Haggai, saying;

2. Speak now to Zerubbabel the sonne of Shealtiel, governour of Judah, and to Joshua the sonne of Josedech the High-Priest, and to the residue of the people, saying;

3. Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory: and how do you see it now? Is it not in your eyes, in comparison of it, as nothing?

These verses hold forth the time of this Sermon, the persons to whom it was directed, and the occasion of it, which was their discouragement; considering the meannesse of this Temple, being compared with Solomons, which now appears to them by the materials they had provided, and by their taking the rubbish off the old foundation, which had been laid in Cyrus time, Ezra 3. 12. for as yet they had built none themselves, v. 10, 14. and so they were discouraged, considering that Ezekiel prophesied of other things. Here two things would be cleared, 1. How it can be supposed that any then alive should have seen the first Temple, for many yeares before this, they are called ancient men, who remembered it, Ezra 3. 12. *Ans.* This place speaks only by way of supposition, if there were any such, and to such as kept on foot that complaint which they had heard from others, at the first laying of the foundation, Ezra 3. 2. It would be cleared upon what ground, the second Temple is thus extenuate, for Cyrus his decree, Ezra 6. 3. compared with

with *Solomons* fabrick, *1 Kings* 6. 2. seems to make it larger? *Ans.* 1. We are to suppose that *Solomons* building was measured by sacred cubits, (called *the first measure*, *2 Chron.* 3. 3.) and that *Cyrus* decreed common cubits, which were by one half lesse, and so the difficultie is in part removed. 2. We are not to conceive that *Cyrus* allowed to double the height of the Temple, but that the porch which was before one hundred and twenty, *2 Chron.* 3. 4. was to be now sixty cubits, and that the sixty cubits in breadth, comprehended also the length of it, which therefore seemeth to be omitted in that decree, because these cubits expressed both these dimensions. 3. There were many other things which might make this Temple as nothing in their eyes, as the losse of many things which had been in the first Temple, and their base materials, having but rolling stones, *Ezra* 5. 8. and 6. 4. in stead of polished stones, *1 King.* 5. 18. and 6. 7. and wanting gold such as *David* and *Solomon* had prepared to adorn it withal, which is a part of their trouble removed by God, *v.* 8. *Doff.* 1. As they who are about the Lords work will need to be frequently encouraged; so when the Lord hath engaged a people in a work, he will not faile to obviate all their tentations by comfortable messages; therefore shortly after they had begun, even in the seventh moneth, &c. came the Word of the Lord, &c. 2. As all are bound to submit to the Word; so the Lord hath an especial eye upon the difficulties of every one employed in his work, to encourage them; therefore are all ranks (even to the meanest) spoken to again, *v.* 2. that they may be strong. 3. As a people sleighting the Lords work, are justly contemptible in his sight, so when they fall to duty, they become precious in his sight, and he is tender of their afflictions: for now they are not *this* people, as *chap.* 1. 2. but the residue of the people. 4. *Satan* is so violent and so active an enemy to a work of Reformation, and our hearts so unfit for going about it, that when other impediments faile, he will fetch discouragements from mens own carnal mindes, and the work it self, as nothing answerable to their expectation, and so be in peril to make it be laid aside when none other would hinder it: for this is a new impediment laid in the way, that the house was nothing like the former. 5. Our judging of Gods work by outward appearances, and looking upon it with a carnal eye, is a great enemy to reformation, while we consider not that the more spiritual glory *Christ* is about to manifest

nifest in his Church, the lesse visible glory will he let appear; because it would take our heart off the other: this was their temptation: Is it not in our eyes in comparison of it as nothing? as judging of prophecies according to sense, whereas Christ by taking away of some of the outward glory, was making way for the greater spiritual glory of the Temple.

Vers. 4. Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD, and be strong, O Jossua sonne of Josedeck the High Priest, and be strong all ye people of the Land, saith the LORD, and work: (for I am with you, saith the LORD of hostes.

Notwithstanding any alleadged cause of fainting, the Lord exhorts all of them to be encouraged and go on with the work, and gives the first ground of encouragement from his presence with them. Doct. 1. Discouragement in any of the Lords people, is a disposition ill pleasing to him, and which they should oppose in themselves, whatever reason say to the contrary, and when their tentations are at the height; therefore in opposition unto, and in the midst of all their fainting thoughts, Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, &c. saith the Lord. 2. Whatever debates and fainting thoughts of heart, the Lords people may meet and be exercised with, yet they would guard against slacking of diligence, and weakening of hands from duty by them; which will be the result of entertained discouragement, whatever present exercise it may seem to put men to; therefore saith the Lord, be strong and work. 3. The Lords work is so honourable an employment for any to be put to, and his presence and approbation so sweet a cordial, that it will be found a great wrong for such as are so employed and rewarded, not to be encouraged: Be strong (saith the Lord) and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hostes.

Vers. 5. According to the Word that I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: Fear ye not.

The exhortation is yet pressed, and this first ground of encouragement confirmed: The Covenant made with them when they came out of *Egypt*, stood yet in force to assure them of his presence; and as they had seen in the deliverance from *Egypt*, what God would and could do for his confederate people; so the same God was by his Spirit and power present with them: or standing (as the word is) ready for employment, whereof some evidences were given in the sending out a Spirit of prophetic, and consequently they needed not feare. *Doff.* 1. Faithlesse and slavish feare is a principal cause of much miscarriage, and will muster up many discouragements and lions in the way of our duty, to hinder us from it, and therefore is to be set against; *Feare ye not.* 2. It may guard the heart of the Lords people against sinful feare, to consider that their mercies are not left in uncertainty, but are made sure to them by a Covenant, which stands firme, notwithstanding sad dayes, and will be forth-coming for them in due effects; so doth the Lord here speak of their mercie and the Covenant; *According to the Word that I covenanted with you, when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you.* 3. The former experiences of Gods appearing for his confederate people, do stand firme as a ground of comfort to them, in following exigents; (however their case and temper may alter) considering his covenanted immutability, and that these things were done not for their worth, but because of his free love: therefore doth the Lord hold forth what was done, *when they came out of Egypt*, as a ground for their present expectations. 4. As it is a sweet signe of Gods presence with a people, where there is a Spirit of prophetic, or (that failing) messages, put in the mouths of his servants to them; or where his Spirit is putting forth his sanctifying vertue, and is a Spirit of grace and supplications; so where the Lord is present according to his Covenant, there his own immediate power and vertue is forth-coming, and ready to effectuate what they cannot carry through, even that power which needs not, yea, will not have (and therefore layes by) our help: in the confidence whereof his people may boast much; all this is imported in that promise; *My Spirit remains among you.*

Verſ. 6. For thus ſaith the LORD of hoſtes, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will ſhake the heavens, and the earth, and the ſea, and the dry land.

7. And I will ſhake all nations, and the deſire of all nations ſhall come, and I will fill this houſe with glory, ſaith the LORD of hoſtes.

As the firſt ground of encouragement ſpeaks chiefly to the exhortation, and that they ſhould go on; ſo this ſecond directly meets with their tentation, ariſing from the meaneſſe of the work; which he undertakes to make up with the glory of Chriſts coming in the fleſh, and the ſpiritual things of his Kingdome, which ſhould begin in and under the time of that ſecond Temple; and promiſeth, that as of old when he gave the Law, he ſhook the earth, *Exod. 19. 18.* ſo now again, within a ſhort time, he would ſhake both heaven and earth, and all Nations, to make way for the coming of Chriſt, who is the light, and life, and deſire of all the Elect among the Nations, and for their bringing unto him, who promiſeth here to fill the ſecond Temple with glory, by his being preſented there unto the Lord at his birth, by his publick teaching there, and by the promulgation of the Goſpel in his Church, prefigured by that Temple, and in part during the ſtanding thereof. This promiſed *ſhaking*, hath relation not only to the great commotions and alterations, (uſually represented in the Old Teſtament as a day of diſſolution of heaven and earth, *1ſa. 13. 13. and 34. 4.* every ſtate having ſomewhat eminent, reſembling an heaven: and ſomewhat inferiour reſembling an earth in it,) that beſell ſuch people and other ſtates about, to make way for Chriſts coming, according to the foregoing prophecies: or to the ſhaking of heaven by his deſcenſion and aſcenſion, and by the joy and admiration of Angels, and the commotion of the Jewes on earth, at the report of his birth; or to the ſignes in heaven and earth (ſuch as darkneſſe, earth-quakes, &c.) at his death and reſurrection: but alſo to the great change wrought by the preaching of the Goſpel, ſhaking looſe and annulling the alterable eſtate, and ceremonies of the Jewiſh Church, represented here by *heaven*, that room may be made for a

new state of the Church, or Kingdome of Heaven, wherein all Nations might have interest, and which should not be altered: and shaking the world in all the parts of it successively, both Islands and Continents, by the preaching of the Gospel, crying down idols, and (as men interpreted) turning the world upside down, and shaking the Elects hearts throughout the world, making them to flee in to Christ, as the Hebrew reading of v. 7. will bear; *I will shake all Nations, and they shall come to the desire of all Nations*, who is to be manifested in that Temple, and bring themselves and their desirable things with them according to the prophecies, *Isa. 60.* and elsewhere, which will be still in doing from age to age, and Nation to Nation, till once for all, God shake and remove these visible heavens and earth, as some expound that of the Apostle, *Heb. 12. 26, 27.* which is indeed the full accomplishment of the prediction, but the place doth also include these other shakings, to bring in a Gospel-state and worship into the world, as previous to that.

Psalm. 1. As Christ manifested in the flesh, is in himself the only desirable and lovely one; so it is he in whom all Nations, as well as Jews, have a right; who if he were known, would be seen desirable, and the only choice of all; and whom his own in all Nations shall be made to desire and flee unto, till the fulnesse of the Gentiles be all brought in: so is he here described, *the desire of all Nations*, as well as *the Lord whom the Jewes sought*, *Mal. 3. 1.* not with relation to any desire of him, any Nation beside the Jewes actually had before he came, but with relation to his excellencie, to his purposes concerning them, and to what the event of his manifestation should be, according to that prophetic, *Gen. 49. 10. 2.* The promised Messiah and Saviour of the world, his coming in our flesh to perfect the work of our Redemption, was to be performed during the standing of the second Temple, and within a short while after their captivity, being compared with the time that had past since he was promised to their fathers, till that time; for, *it is a little while, and the desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill the house, &c.* The time being now confined to *Daniels* seventy weeks: so that the Jewes who understand this place of the Messiah, and yet deny that he is yet come, as yet so many hundreds of yeares, do bewray the blindness and hardness of their hearts.

3. The way of Gods worship and of the Church, established by Christ at his coming in the flesh,

Is such, as however there may be many commotions even untill the end of the world, for its getting footing where it had none, and its restoring where it hath been dispossessed; yet in its own nature is unalterable, and is to continue without any new formes or wayes, till God once for all shake and dissolve heaven and earth: for, however after that shaking at Sinai in giving the Law, there was to be a new shaking of the ceremonial Law, to make room for the Gospel-way: yet it was to be but yet once, and no alteration after that. 4. As the Lord will shake and overturn all things before his Word saile, and his people want promised help, and as all Nations have their owne time of shaking and commotions: so every such case doth not speak ruine, but sometime is the fore-runner of Christs coming in a Gospel-reformation, especially where Christ becomes precious and desirable unto a people; therefore to confirme the Jewes, doth he hold forth his power employed for fulfilling his promises, and that in this order, as to shake heaven and earth, &c. and then the desire of all Nations shall come. 5. As there is much opposition lying in Christ his Kingdom and Gospels way in the world, and especially in mens own stubborn hearts, which he both can and will remove; where he hath a purpose of good to any: so there must be strange shakings of Nations and persons, before Christ and the Gospel can have their due place or employment: therefore he shakes heaven and earth, and all Nations, ere this great mercy can have place, or they be fit for it, that the desire of all Nations come. 6. Christ manifested in the flesh, and his presence in his Gospel, makes up the want of all outward visible glory amongst a people, and the want of external pompe in worship: for, in opposition to their mean thoughts of their work, it is promised: the desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory; yea, the administration of the Gospel is more glorious then that of the Law, in regard that in giving the Law he only shook the earth, but now both heaven and earth, as it is expounded, Heb. 12. 16. 7. Christ the promised Messiah, as he was to be true man, bone of our bone; so was he also from eternity very God Jehovah, equal in power and glory with the Father, who was conversant by his Spirit with his own people, and had a care of them before his incarnation: for he, whose presence was to make up the glory of the Temple is Jehovah, and here himself promisseth, I will fill this house with glory. saith the Lord of hostes, which

is Christ's speech, to whom we come in the Gospel, as is cleared further, *Heb.* 12. 24, 25, 26.

Verf. 8. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hostes.

9. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hostes: and in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hostes.

The third ground of encouragement raiseth the promise of glory mentioned, *v. 7* yet-higher, and meets with a particular reason of their tentation; for whereas they complained of the want of gold and silver wherewith to adorn the Temple, and make it stately, as in *Solomons* dayes; the Lord declares, that if he accounted that to be the true glory of his Church, and took pleasure in that carnal splendor, he could easily be at the expences, having as much at his command, as in *Solomons* dayes; but did refrain from that now, as purposing to traine them up for a greater glory of the second Temple, by Christ's presence and spiritual gifts poured out, (of which all the glory of the first Temple was but a shadow,) and particularly, by the preaching of the doctrine of reconciliation and spiritual peace by the death of *Jesus Christ* which should begin there, and from thence go through the world. *Doff. 1.* The absolute dominion of the riches and splendor of the world belongs unto the Lord, who hath all these things in his power to dispose of as he pleases, and who is to be eyed, acknowledged and submitted unto by every man in his portion and lot, according as he dispenseth it: for, *the silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hostes.* 2. It may satisfie the people of God in their wants, to consider that God hath all they want at his command, and would not withhold it, unless he saw such a dispensation tending to their good; to meet with the *Jewes* tentation of poverty; *the silver is mine, &c. saith the Lord of hostes.* 3. When the Lord withholds any glory or splendor, from his people and work, it is for their advantage, and flows from a purpose to give what is better, if they had eyes to see it; for when he withholds silver and gold which they so much desired,

red, he purposeth that the glory of this latter house shall be greater then of the former. 4. The spiritual things of Christs Kingdom do far surpass all the legal administrations in glory, and do put more real splendor on any place where they are administered, then all the pomp of the world beside can do: the glory of this latter house shall be greater then of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: for there, there was but a Solomon, here a greater then Solomon: there was gold and worldly splendour, here heavenly treasures shined: there was the ministration of the letter, here of the Spirit: there a precious ointment, here the oil of gladness; there God dwelt in thick darkness, here the light of the world shined; and in a word, there were the dark shadowes, here the true substance. 5. As peace and reconciliation with God, is the allowance of Christs subjects, which out-shines all the splendour and glory of the world; so it is the great glory of the Gospel-administrations, that by them peace may be had through Jesus Christ, which was attainable by none of the works and ceremonies of the Law being rested on; therefore in stead of their wonted splendour, and in opposition to former administrations, it is promised, that by Christs coming, his death and doctrine, In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.

Verf. 10. In the foure and twentieth day of the ninth moneth in the second year of Darius, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the Prophet, saying;

11. Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Ask now the Priests concerning the Law, saying;

12. If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? and the Priests answered, and said, No.

13. Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? and the Priest answered, and said, It shall be unclean.

14. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD, and so is every work of their hands, and that which they offer there is unclean.

This Second Sermon was delivered two moneths after the former, when now having prepared materials, as *ch. 1. 8.* and fitted all things in the space of three moneths, *ch. 1. 14. 15.* they are ready to lay the foundations of the Temple, or at least to build on the old foundations that had been laid at their first returning. *Ezra 3.* in so far as they were not demolished, as appears here from *v. 15. and 18.* and the scope of this part of the Sermon is, from ruled and clear cases in the law, which the Priests could resolve unto them, to discover their former sin for which God had punished them, while they rested upon their building the Altar, *Ezra 3. 2.* and offering sacrifice on it, and yet in the mean time did follow their own interests, neglecting the Temple of the Lord, and to stir them up to do the work they were now about purely, and to joine personal reformation with it. In summe, it is as if *Haggai* had said, As your ordinary Priests will out of the Law resolve you, that however the sacrifices being consecrate to God, and now holy, put some ceremonial holiness on the garments, which immediately touch them, *Lev. 6. 27.* yet that holiness cannot be extended to any thing which the garment toucheth, either of purpose or by chance, and not the flesh immediately, *v. 11. 12.* and on the contrary, that ceremonial pollution doth make, not only a mans garment unclean, but whatsoever also, whether common or sacred, it toucheth, *v. 13.* (which is clear from the Law *Lev. 11. 24.* and *15. 4.* *Numb. 9. 10.* and *19. 11. 13.*) So on the same grounds do I in the Name of the Lord assure all of you, who deserve not the name of my people, that your former negligence could not be cleansed by your sacrifices, but it rather polluted them as well as your selves, and your other works; and that a present holy work will not sanctifie prophane works, but your prophany will rather pollute it, as to you, *v. 14. Daft. 1.* All that is written in the Law concerning ceremonial pollution, is but a shadow and representation of the moral uncleanness of men; which the sensible soul wil finde as difficult, (if not more) to avoid, as the Jewes found that, while it put them to a perpetual affrightment and caution: therefore *Haggai* by the one, points at the other as the substance, and sheweth that the same proportion holds in both. 2. It is a profitable way for effectual convincing of sin, to make use of any principles of light that are in men, and by them to draw conclusions upon the conscience; so doth *Haggai* make use of ac-

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CHAP. 3. *Prophecie of HAGGAI.* 25

knowledge and ruled cases, from which he inferres a gulf upon them, which they did not so clearly see. 3. As the lips of the servants of God are to preserve knowledge, and they are to be made use of by his people, in resolution of difficulties; so they are not to be looked on as infallible guides, as if every thing they say, they could not erre in it; but they are to speak from the Word, and their Doctrine to be examined by it; for this is the will of the Lord of hostes, that we *take the Priests concerning the Law.* 4. Such as rightly examine themselves will easily perceive the great difficulty there is of good, in comparison of ill; and how they are farre more easily polluted then sanctified, so much do both cases hold out, that holinesse extended no further at best then the garment which immediately touched the holy thing, but pollution reached further. 5. External performances, whether of Gods worship or in his publick work, will not of it self make a man acceptable; but on the contrary, want of personal reconciliation and purity will pollute best works will render the workers contemptible, and all they do vile; so doth the Lord teach us, that by reason of former and present pollution, *So (to wit unclean) is this Nation before me, saith the Lord, and so is every work of their hands, and that which they offer there is unclean.* 6. It is a profitable study when people are about works that are in themselves right, to be sensible not only of former failings and neglects, but of present uncleannesse which they may contract in them; and for this end to search what they are in the sight of God, that they may be humbled, and not delude nor please themselves with the bare work; for this end comes this Sermon out that same day they were ready to build, that they might not so soon forget their former way, nor be unmindfull that there was more required for approbation, then being employed in an holy work.

Verl. 15. *And now I pray you consider from this day and upward, from before a Stone was laid upon a Stone in the temple of the LORD.*

16. *Since those dayes were, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten: when one came to the presse-fat for to draw out fifty vessels, out of the presse, there were but twenty,*

17. *I smote you with blasting, and with mildew, and with haile in all the labours of your hands: yet ye returned not to me, saith the LORD.*

18. *Consider now from this day, and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth moneth, even from the day that the foundation of the LORDS Temple was laid, consider it.*

19. *Is the seed yet in the barne? yea, as yet the vine and the fig-tree, and the pomegranate, and the Olive-tree hath not brought forth: from this day will I blesse you.*

The scope of the second part of this Sermon, is to shew that however God will put difference betwixt workers, and knoweth who are sincere, and who not, yet to encourage them to be diligent in it, as being a work which he approves in it self, and which he will reward with temporal blessing and a change of his former dispensations. And therefore he stirres them up to remembre the tokens of Gods anger on them while they neglected the Temple, v. 15. that their expectations of the harvest, and what they had gathered, were much disappointed, v. 16. and the Lord, with the drought, Chap. 1. 11. had otherwayes also smitten the fruits of the ground, whereof they had made no good use, v. 17. but now having begun the work, v. 18. he promisseth to send a blessing on the fruits of the ground, and this he doth in the midst of winter when their seed was sown and nothing had budded, and consequently nothing could be foretold of the ensuing harvest, but by God only; that so by observing the subsequent seasons and the harvest it selfe, they might be confirmed in the faith of Gods approving their work, and be encouraged in it, v. 19. *Doct. 1.* Though the Lords dispensations be visible and felt by all, yet the right considering and understanding of them is a work of much difficulty, and to which men need serious stirring up, especially to take up the right cause of them; therefore after all the pointing out of their former condition in the former Sermons, they are again invited to consider it, *I pray you consider, &c.* 2. Famine and scarcity is one of the publick scourges whereby the Lord chastiseth the sin-
full

full contempt and negligence of his people in his work and service, and he will be conspicuous in inflicting of it; for, *Before a stone was laid on a stone in the Temple of the Lord, when one came to an heap of twenty measures, there were but ten, &c. I smite you with blasting, &c.* 3. As it is the usual plague accompanying common judgements that they do not work upon the hearts of men, to draw them nearer God, but rather harden them: so such an impatient disposition when God strikes, is a ground of further controversy; therefore he marks by the way their stupidity, *Yet ye turned not to me, saith the Lord.* 4. However temporal things are not to be looked on as the chief reward of serving God, nor as absolutely promised, nor yet are they to be so much looked to under the Gospel, as the Church of the Jewes might under their pedagogy; yet in this the promise, even concerning these things, holds good, that following of God hath the promise of this life, in so farre as it is for the followers good; that Gods changing adversity into prosperity when a people set about his work, should be a confirmation to their faith and strengthen their hands; that whatever adversity come on the Church, it is not to be fathered on Gods work, as if it had been the cause of her wo; that as neglecters of Gods work are reall losers in their own affaires, and will prove so in the end; so followers of his work, have a reall advantage in it; and in a word, that Gods work is never followed without a blessing evidenced some way or other to the godlies satisfaction; This much we may learn from this particular promise made to the Church of the Jewes, whereas they had been formerly much afflicted, now, *from this day will I blesse you.* 5. It is a profitable study, to remark the advantages of following God, and to study encouragement in that duty; so much are we taught by the Lords exciting them to consider the change of his dealing, as trysting with the very day of their amending their fault. 6. God is so soveraigne and absolute a Lord of all things, and hath times and seasons, blessings and cursings; so in his hand, as he may undertake to do things, whereof there is no visible probability or certainty in the second causes, and can certainly perform them; therefore doth he undertake to blesse them, when second causes and the season could speak no such thing. 7. It is the prerogative of God only to know future contingent events, which depend on times and seasons and uncertaine second causes; and are known by men by no study of second causes, and their influences, but only by immediate

divine revelation; this is held forth as Gods prerogative by his extraordinary Prophet, to foretell in the midst of winter, what the succeeding harvest should produce.

Ver. 20. And again the word of the LORD came unto Haggai in the foure and twentieth day of the moneth, saying,

21. Speak to Zerubbabel, governour of Iudah, saying, I will shake the heavens and the earth.

22. And I will overthrow the throns of kingdomes, and I will destroy the strength of the Kingdomes of the heathen, and I will overthrow the charrets, and those that ride in them, and the horses and their riders shall come down, every one by the sword of his brother.

23. In that day, saith the LORD of hostes, Will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the sonne of Shealtiel, saith the LORD, and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the LORD of hostes.

The last Sermon, delivered on the same day with the former, may be understood of Zerubbabel the type, unto whom is promised for the behoofe of his successors and that people, that whereas God was about to send great commotions, and was about to overthrow Kingdomes of the world and their power, setting them by the eares among themselves; yet he would preserve him, and that people governed by him, as his precious jewels, and as his chosen people, especially because Christ the substance of this type, was to come of them. And so we learn, 1. It is the duty of the Lords watchmen to approve themselves before him in their diligent and active going about their calling, and preaching the Word of the Lord instantly; for Haggai is here sent out again upon the same day he had the former Sermon. 2. As the office of Magistracy, especially over the Lords people, is no easie work; so honest Magistrates shall have their

their own peculiar encouragements from God; Therefore is *Haggai* commanded to *speake to Zerubbabel* *governour of Judah*. 3. Hon:st Magistrates will be selfe-denied, and will look on their publick charge as if it were their own particular, so that favours promised and conferred on the people they govern, are matter of encouragement to them; for this promise made to *Zerubbabel* was not accomplished to himselfe nor in his time, but to the people under his successors, when the Persian and Grecian Monarchies were overturned, and all the Kingdomes on every hand were reeling, and threatening ruine to the Church amongst the rest; and yet this is his encouragement, as if it had tended to his own particular behoofe. 4. As the Kingdomes of the children of men, even of very Pagans, are at Gods disposal to settle or remove them as he pleases; so these most eminent dignities, are but uncertaine things, obnoxious to many alterations, wherein neither authority nor power will hinder Gods purpose, nor will meanes be wanting, so long as there is one Nation to dash upon another; so much is held out in this promise, *I will shake heaven and earth, and I will overthrow the throne of Kingdomes, &c.* 5. Albeit the Church may seem to have reason to fear her enemies, when they are in power, and to fear the great commotions that are in the world about her, lest she being a weak party, come down with the rest; yet in her weakest condition she may expect preservation in the midst of combustions, especially where God hath any further work to do in her; for as the Church of the Jewes, lying in the midst of tottering Kingdomes, especially of *Syria* and *Egypt*, (which seemed most to threaten her ruine) gets a promise that *in that day* of common combustion, she shall be *as a signet*; because Christ was to be born in her: so may every particular visible Church expect, who hath Christ mystical in his members to bring forth to God. 6. The Church is to confirm her own faith in the truth of promises, by considering not what she is in her selfe, or what her condition can promise, but by looking to what Gods power, and providence can make her, and do for her; for so the promise runnes, *I will take thee, and make thee as a signet*, be what thou wilt in thy selfe. The fountaine of all the Churches happinesse, lies in her having a room in the Lords intimate affection, making her precious in his sight, and being forth-coming for what is good to her; of which the Church is to take full hold, and read every dispensation by; for all the favours intended

to Zerubbabel, and in him to the people, is summed up in this; *I will make thee as a signet*; which imports great respect and affection as to a ring and jewel, which being on the finger, is still in the possessors sight and kept diligently, see *Jer. 22. 24. Cant. 8. 6. 8.* As obedience is the way of obtaining favour, so the ground of all respects and favours flowing from it to the Church, is Gods free choosing of her, according to the good pleasure of his will, to be the object of his tender love; and of the mercies which love allowes on her, which the Church is to look unto and not to any thing in her selfe, therefore is the promise made to Zerubbabel *my servant*: and the reason given, *For I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hostes.*

The promise may also more fitly be understood of Christ the substance, who was in Zerubbabels loines, and whose type Zerubbabel was in his Government; and so the promise holds out the same in substance with what we heard, *v. 6, 7.* to wit, that God was about to work great alterations in the heaven, or religious external forme of the Jewish Church; and in the earth and kingdomes of men, setting them one against another, breaking their power, and bringing them down, and all for Christs behoofe, that he as the chosen servant of the Father, and his Church may be seen to be precious, and become glorious by stability and enlargement. Hence learn, 1. Christ the promised Messiah is the true Sonne and successor of David according to the flesh, the sweet Governour and King of his Church, and he who is the conductor of his people out of their spiritual bondage and captivity; for these causes is he spoken to under the name of Zerubbabel Governour of Judah. 2. The promises concerning the Churches happinesse are made unto Christ as the Fathers party, who having purchased them by his obedience unto death, is also able to secure them to his people; therefore this promise is made to Zerubbabel in the type. 3. Albeit the Lord was author and enjoyner of the external forme of the Jewish worship, and the Covenant made with them is the same in substance with the Covenant of the New Testament; yet it was not the will of God that the externall way of administration of the Covenant among them should endure under the Kingdome of the Messiah, who was by his death to put an end to these shadows; for, *I will shake the heavens*, saith the Lord, 4. Although there be many tossings in the world where Christ comes with his Gospel, yet his Kingdome will be no loser by them; but

but will be the Lords delight, which he will adorne with these ruines, by making it to stand while others fall, by bringing down opposition and enemies, and dantonng and breaking men, that they may more easily embrace the Gospel, and he may make conquests upon them; therefore when he makes all these overturnings, v. 22. *In that day I will make thee as a signet, v. 23.* glorious, precious, and safely kept. 5. The foundation of the Churches happines stands on Christs having been obedient to his Father as her surety, on his interest in the Fathers affection, and that he is the only chosen way of her safety, which the Father hath found out, and wherein he acquiesceth, and in all these that flee to be hid in him; therefore is all the happines of the Gospel-Church summed up in this, *I will take thee, O Zerubbabel, and make thee as a signet, for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hostes.*



Zechariah.

THE ARGUMENT.



HHe Prophet Haggai, having spent some time in preaching to these who had returned from the captivity of Babylon; the Lord sends forth this Prophet Zechariah to assist him in the work, and so declare further of his minde to the Church; partly in visions, partly in doctrinal Sermons, and partly in propheticall predictions; who having exhorted the people unto repentance, propounds divers visions for the encouragement of that people in their low condition, and to go on in the work they had begun, without declaring that he was ill pleased with their sins, and would punish the guilty, however the Church and his work prospered, chap. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Then he resolves their case of conscience concerning their former fastings, shewing unto them what had been their failings hitherto, and what their duty is, if they would enjoy the great things he intended for them, chap. 7, 8. Lastly, he comes to prophesie of the ruine of all their enemies round about, of the coming of Christ, his death and passion, the pouring out of his Spirit, and spreading of the Gospel, with the rejection of the Nation of
the

the *Times*, till the time appointed for their Conversion, *chaps*
9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14.

CHAP. I.

IN this Chapter, (after the Inscription, v. 1.) the Lord exhorteth them to repentance, from the consideration of Gods displeasure against their fathers, v. 2. and from the hope of his favour, v. 3, and that they should not imitate their fathers in contempning of the Word, v. 4. considering that though their fathers, and the Prophets also who had admonished them, were dead: yet the Word is permanent in all ages, and the truth of it appeared in the effects upon their fathers, which were yet to be seen, v. 5, 6. Next, he propounds two comfortable visions for their encouragement, in the first whereof is held forth Christ in his Kingly office, attended on by Angels, v. 7, 8, perfectly knowing and observing the quiet estate of enemies, while the Church was afflicted, v. 9, 10, 11. interceding thereupon for the Church, v. 12. and getting a good answer, v. 13. which by the Prophet he communicates to the Church, v. 14, 15, 16, 17. In the second vision, the enemies who had molested the Church, are represented to the Prophet, v. 18, 19. together with instruments prepared of God to crush their power, v. 20, 21.

Vers. 1. *I*N the eighth month, in the second
year of Darius, came the Word of
the LORD, unto Zechariah the sonne of Barachiah,
the sonne of Iddo the Prophet, saying.

This Inscription is the same in substance with that of Haggai, only he comes out two moneths later, and hath been a man whose ancestors have been of note among that people, and of the Priests lineage, as appears, *Nehem.* 12. 13. with 16. Concerning whom I shall not determine whether this be he of whom mention is made, *Mat.* 23. 35. or if it be the son of *Zechariah*, (who it may be had two names) of whom, *2 Chron.* 24. 21. though both the name and times reckoned by Christ, seem rather to plead that it was this Prophet. *Deut.* As it is

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a mercie unto faithful Ministers, when the Lord raiseth up helpers unto them, to strengthen their hands, and joyne with them in their painful services; so it is a token that God hath some great work amongst a people, when he raiseth up many faithful instruments; as on the contrary, it is a sad token when their number decreaseth; therefore *Haggai* being imbarqued in that work, and the Temple-work being to prosper; In the eighth moneth, (two moneths after the former,) came the Word of the Lord to Zechariah.

Verſe 2. *The LORD hath been ſore diſpleaſed with your fathers.*

The Prophet being to carry comfortable tidings to this people, begins with the doctrine of repentance, inviting them not to obstruct their own mercie by impenitencie: and to make way for this doctrine, he points out to them the greatnesse of Gods displeasure against their fathers for their sin, as might be seen in the horrible calamities that did come upon them; which might teach their children not to expect exemption if they followed their way. *Doct. 1.* A people are prepared and fitted for favourable manifestations of God, by repentance; and mercies are sweetest and most comfortable unto penitents, therefore the Lord premits this doctrine to the following visions, as the only way to fit people for them, and make them truly comfortable to them. 2. No priviledge bestowed upon any people, will exempt them from sharp corrections when they sin; for, albeit the Jewes were the only people of God at that time; yet the Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers, which is also a warning to them. 3. Though the Lord do not chastise any of his cholen and regenerate people in pure wrath, or beyond the bounds of moderation; yet his fatherly displeasure may be very hot and sad in its effects, and his displeasure against a visible Church, which hath abused mercy very grievous, and therefore ought to be seriously laid to heart; therefore he calls them to consider how the Lord hath been sore displeased, or had displeasure on displeasure. 4. Albeit examples of Gods anger, especially when they are near, ought to be effectual documents to others, exciting to tremble and repent, yet such is the stupidity of men, that notwithstanding any such warning, they will

will be ready to adventure on the same sins, which God hath so remarkably punished; therefore they need stirring up to see and make use of Gods anger against their fathers, the effects whereof were very visible to them.

Verf. 3. Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hostes, Turne ye unto me, saith the LORD of hostes, and I will turne unto you, saith the LORD of hostes.

The Lord subjoynes the use of the former example, in an exhortation to repentance, to which he encourages them by his own invitation, and promise of being reconciled to them, and of dealing favourably with them. *Doct. 1.* Judgements rightly studied, do call for repentance as the only remedy, and ought not to harden, stupifie, or provoke to murmuring, which aggredges sin, and ripens for more judgements; upon the former doctrine in v. 2. is inferred, *therefore turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hostes.* 2. It may be a great encouragement to the guilty sinner to repent, to consider, that the Lord not only allows, but calls him to it; and that he is most excellent to whom the penitent sinner comes; therefore God interposes in this, *Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord, turne ye*, and thrice designes himself *the Lord of hostes.* 3. True penitents, and souls indeed sensible of sin, will discern, that sin hath not only caused a distance betwixt God and them but an alienation of affection in them, and that their back is turned on God, and will not only loath, but renounce their sinful way, not resting on any thing, till they attain to communion and reconciliation with God: so much is imported in this description of repentance: *Turn ye unto me.* 4. The Lord, in letting out his displeasure against his people, doth not cast off thoughts of mercy, but chastiseth them, that he may drive them to his mercy, which upon repentance he is ready to manifest: *Turn ye unto me, and I will turn unto you.* 5. The Lord in suspending his turning unto us till we repent, doth not import that we can repent of our selves: but his scope is to convince us of our duty, and make us sensible of our inability, that we may flee to him, and then he will both turn us and turn to us; thus are we to understand this order of his command and promise; *Turn ye and I will turn*: See, *Jer. 31. 18, 19.* 6. No outward dispensation or token of favour can be comfortable, or promise that things shall

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go well, so long as a people are not turned to God; so much doth also this order, *Turn ye, and I will turn, teach, that no dispensation of God could assure them, that he was turned to be in favour with them, till they repented.*

Vers. 4 Be ye not as your fathers unto whom the former Prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hostes, Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not heare nor bearken unto me, saith the LORD.

A second exhortation is, that they would not imitate their perverse fathers, of whom they were descended, in contemning the admonitions to repentance given them by the Lords Prophets, which is also an argument inviting them to repent, who were come of such Progenitors. *Doct. 1.* Custome and example in a sinful way, is so far from being a warrant to others to imitate it; that on the contrary, when men consider the ill disposition they have from their Progenitors, the power of inveterate sinful custome, and how much old debt is lying upon them, who walk in such pathes, it may be a special motive to repentance, and getting out of such a course: therefore saith he to the Jewes who gloried of their fathers, *Be not as your fathers, &c.* 2. It is an usual lot of the Lords faithful servants to labour in vaine in outward appearance, and it is an old sin of the visible Church, to continue the Word of God in their mouth, of which posterity is to be aware: therefore he instances this sin of their fathers which they are to avoid; that the Prophets cried, but they did not heare. 3. As it speaks much patience and long-suffering in God, to warne a sinful people of their danger; so these who are sent out in that employment, ought to be faithful, bold and free, enforcing their doctrine from the divine authority of the Word; for as their sinful fathers had the former Prophets, so they cried, saying, *Thus saith the Lord of hostes.* 4. The Lord requites of such as would approve themselves true penitents, that their turning to God, and reformation, flow from a serious conviction of the sinfulness of their debordings; the Prophets doctrine was not only to turne, but *turne ye from your evil ways, and from your evil*

doings, that is, their courses which they ought to look upon as grosse. 5. As some may cometo that height of sin in the Church, as not to give an eare to the Lords message; and as none can prove themselves hearers, who make not some conscience of giving obedience; so inadvertency, and not considering who speaks, and what is spoken, is a cause why the Word smiteth so ill successe; *They did not hear*, (either would not give an eare; or did not obey) *nor hearken* (to wit, attentively) *unto me*. 6. The contempt and sleighting of the Word of God in the mouth of his servants, will be reckoned as a contempt and injurie done to God; the despisers of the former Prophets, *did not hear nor hearken unto me*, saith the Lord.

Verf. 5. Your fathers: where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever?

6. *But my words and my statutes, which I commanded my servants the Prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers? and they returned and said, Like as the LORD of hostes thought to do unto us, according to our wayes, and according to our doings; so hath he dealt with us.*

He subjoyne a reason why they should not imitate their fathers, taken from the fruits of their contempt; they who would not hearken to the Word, were now not to be found, but consumed with judgements, according as had been threatened: and albeit the Prophets died as well as their fathers, and that it may be before what they threatened was executed, yet their fathers had found that the Word they spake died not with them, but was effectually executed, insonmuch that they were made to confesse that threatenings had not been pronounced in vain, but were accomplished as was foretold, and according to their works: and therefore, however their fathers who had been warned, and the Prophets who spake unto them, were dead, yet they ought to look on the Word as a perpetual rule of righteousness, which is still alive to have alike execution in all ages: and this example of their fathers disobedience, and the sad fruits of it should be fresh in their memory, and alive to instruct and invite them to repentance, so much the rather as some of these fruits, were yet to be seen in their low and afflicted

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ed condition. *Dost.* 1. When the Lord honours a people by sending his Word unto them, it is their part seriously to consider and lay to heart, the authority and certainty thereof, that they may take heed that they dallie not with God (speaking therein, and so deceive themselves; for this end doth the Prophet, in the beginning of his Ministry, so seriously inculcate the truth and certainty of the Word from former experience. 2. Contemners and sleighters of the Word will not alwayes continue to maintain their opposition and rebellion, but will at last succumb in their cause, and be a misting; for, *your fathers* (who did not hearken) *where are they?* what is become of their opposition? how have they gained their point? so he interrogates their children, that they may consider on this. 3. Whatever encouragement to sin, men gather from the evil example of others, yet a right view of the issue of their way, may convince them of follie who follow it: for, *your fathers*, (of whom ye boast, and whom ye will imitate) *where are they?* 4. The divine authority and certainty of the Word doth not depend upon, nor is to be judged by the condition of the men who are employed to carry it: their frailty doth not diminish its perfection, their baseness doth not take away its authority, their outward hard lots will not hinder it from having effect, and their mortality and death will not hinder it to be immortal, and take effect in all ages; for, *though the Prophets do not live for ever, yet my Word did take hold*, &c. when they were gone it lived. 5. Every man by nature is a fugitive from the convictions or directions of the Word, and a defender of himself from the rod following thereupon, so long as he is able, so much is implied in the Word its *taking hold*, or *overtaking* of him as a fugitive. 6. The Word of God in its performance and effects, will at last reach and overtake the greatest shifter; will drive him from all his subterfuges, and strike through all his bucklers: for, *my words* — *did they not take hold of (or overtake) your fathers?* 7. The conscience of the greatest contemner of the Word, will at last, when God reckons with him, be forced to acknowledge the infallible truth of the Word, and certainty of its accomplishment, and the desert of sin, and that however they thought it sweet and advantageous, yet the real fruits of it are such, as Gods Word tells, and that justly: for their stiff-necked fathers *returned and said* *Like as the Lord of hostes thought to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to*

our doings. So hath he dealt with us. 8. Examples of Gods judgements are not to be looked on as singular things, concerning only these on whom they are inflicted: but as executed according to a rule of righteousness revealed in the Word, which is still the same in all ages, and therefore to be a document to others, when they who smarted are gone: therefore when their fathers and the Prophets are dead, the Lord sets this example before them to excite them to repentance, considering that the Word lived and was still the same, and that the ruines of their fathers calamity were left amongst them to preach to the living.

Verf. 7. Upon the four and twentieth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Sebat, in the second year of Darius came the Word of the LORD unto Zechariah, the sonne of Barachiab, the sonne of Iddo the Prophet, saying;

8. I saw by night, and behold, a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle-trees that were in the bottome, and behinde him were there red horses, speckled and white.

Followes a comfortable vision, wherein is represented Christ on foot in his Church, taking notice of the case of all people for her good, and drawing the condition of all enemies to the Churches use, by interceding for her, and getting good answers, which he communicates. In these verses, after the designation of the time, and declaration of the authority of this vision, v. 7. we have Christ represented in his Kingly office, caring for the things of the Church, under the type of a man riding on a red horse, among the myrtle-trees in the bottome or valley, by which we may understand, partly the low and obscure condition of his Church at that time, and partly, the way of Christs reigning in the world, which as in it self it seemes humble and low, as being in a valley, and covered with the shadow of black and thick trees, such as the myrtles are, so is it not alwayes seen by the Church for her comfort, till her eyes be enlightened as the Prophets were. This Kingly state of Christ further described from his Attendants; for, under the

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the type of red horses speckled and white behinde him, is represented his having Angels for Ministers, and all creatures ready for every dispensation, whether sad, represented by red; or comfortable, represented by white; or mixed of mercy and judgement, represented by speckled horses, v. 8. *Doff.* 1. It concernes these who are invited to repentance by the Lord, to be real in hearkening to that invitation, and real in that duty; therefore after the former Sermon, there is no further message for three moneths at least, till it were seen what fruit that Sermon had, and how real they were in any thing they professed; the former was in the eighth moneth, and this upon the foure and twentieth day of the eleventh moneth. 2. The Lord doth teach his Church, and they are to receive instruction, not only by his Word, but by signes appointed by him joyned therewith, whereby also the Church is informed, that the reality of what God saith is such, as if the thing said were exhibited; for, this whole vision as well as the doctrinal part of it, is called *the Word of the Lord unto Zechariah*, saying, intimating that these types were appointed to teach, and that Gods words are not empty words, but real things, exhibiting to view promised mercies. 3. Things spiritual cannot be seen of us while we are within time, but darkly, and as through a glasse; so much doth this way of representing things spiritual by things bodily teach us. 4. As the eternal Son of God had his delights among the children of men, before the earth was made; so from age to age before his Incarnation, he gave proof unto his Church, what pleasure he had in her, and to become a man, and be found in the forme of a servant for her sake: as appears from this, that he who is the Angel of the Lord, and Intercessor for his Church, v. 12. who hath Angels attending him, and at his command, v. 8, 11. yea, who is *Jehovah*, v. 20. (and therefore is no other then the Son of God) appears here for his Church, and that as a man appearing in bodily shape, and (as it were) essaying before-hand; how it would fit him to be bone of our bone indeed. 5. Christs residence and abode in an especial way is in his Church, and as her low condition will not banish him, or make him seek another lodging, so his presence is matter of her comfort, how little soever it seem to promise: so much may be gathered from his being among the myrtle trees in the bottom, pointing out his Church in a low condition, and this as a matter comfortable, though

his presence and way seem as little conspicuous, as a man under a dark shade. 6. Though Christs presence in his Church be oftentimes, wanting to sense, and little discerned by most, nor feared by enemies: yet they who have open eyes may see him in the Church in the darkest houre: this is held out to us by that the Prophet even by night saw a man among the myrtle trees: neither the night (taking it figuratively for their dark condition) nor the dark shadow, could hide him from the men illuminated by God. 7. Christ in his Church is not asleep in her danger, but ready and watching a fit opportunity to let forth that zeale and vengeance, wherewith he is cloathed against her enemies: therefore is he riding, and that on a red horse, signifying vengeance and severity, and he stood among the myrtle-trees, as watching his opportunity to prove that it was so. 8. Christ the King, Head and Protector of his Church, hath all power in heaven and earth given to him for her behoof, he hath Angels and all creatures at his call to execute his will, and dispensations of all sorts, at his command, to let forth, as her condition or the temper of her enemies requireth: for, beside him were there red horses speckled and white.

Verf. 9 Then said I, O my Lord, what are these? And the Angel that talked with me, said unto me, I will shew thee what these be.

10. And the man that stood among the myrtle-trees, answered, and said, These are they whom the LORD hath sent to walke to and fro through the earth.

11. And they answered the Angel of the LORD that stood among the myrtle-trees, and said, We have walked to and fro through the earth: and behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest.

So much of this vision is expounded, as was at that time for the Churches behoof, and is given by Christ under the representation of an Angel, talking with the Prophet, who is the same with the man among the myrtle-trees, as appears, v. 10. and it is he who intercedes for the Church, v. 12, 13. and gives the Prophet a Commission, v. 14. which is only Christs

Prero-

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Prerogative. And so he represents Christ in his Prophetick office, who before appeared as Head of the Church on horse-back: he being enquired at by the Prophet, undertakes to informe him, v. 9. and accordingly teaches him concerning his Omniscience and Sovereign Providence in the world, that he exactly considers the condition of all countreys and men, and how all the world about are at ease except the Church, all which is represented by the type of Angels sent forth to view the world, as great Kings do their Intelligencers and Agents, v. 10. and by their returning an account of their diligence concerning the worlds quiet condition, v. 11. *Dott. 1.* As Christ is appointed King and Head, so also to be the great Prophet and Teacher of his Church and people, who hath revealed the Father, and his counsel concerning mans salvation, and who must be the teacher of all those who would instruct his people to any purpose; for, the man among the myrtle-trees, is also the *Angel that talked with the Prophet.* 2. As the Lord exalts none to much communion with himself, but they need somewhat to abase them, and keep them in minde of their owne wants; so in a special manner, as men grow in a right way of knowledge, they will also grow in the humbling sense of their own ignorance: therefore the Prophet being exalted to see visions, findes his own ignorance, and is put to propound questions; *O my Lord, what are these?* 3. As Christ hath all treasures of wisdom and knowledge to solve every difficulty; so he is willing to clear every dark case to his people, who humbly imploy him, in so far as is needful and for their good; for, his answer to the Prophets question is, *I will shew thee what these be.* 4. Angels are at Christs command, to come and go at his pleasure, and he is their Head; to whom they are subject and accountable; and their promptitude and obedience unto him is such as may be a pattern to all his servants. This is implied in his sending them to walk to and fro through the earth, and that they answered the Angel of the Lord, *we have walked to and fro through the earth.* 5. Christ hath perfect notice of all the affaires, and conditions, and wayes of the children of men, for the good of his Church: this is represented by his Angels going forth to spie all things, and by their bringing him an account for information; not that he needs these helps, who knowes all things immediately by himself, but he expresseth it thus; partly to set out his glory to our capacity, that

that he is a Royal King, with a great train, and many intelligencers and agents abroad, and partly to condescend to the weaknesse of our faith, which would see meanes for effectuating that which he hath insufficiency in himself to do. 6. It pleaseth the Lord for the triall and exercise of his Churches faith and patience, and for making way to his bowels of sympathy, to afflict his people, when other people are at ease, and to leave them furthest behinde to sense in outward things, who have best right to be well beyond others; for *the whole earth sitteth still and is at rest while Judah is vexed.* 7. As Christ perfectly knows the condition of the world and of his people, so his infinite wisdom is the only fit earver of all remedies, and improver of cases, to his Churches advantage, this is insinuate in that they make their report simply, without prescription of a remedy, but leave that to him.

Vers. 12. Then the Angel of the LORD answered, and said, O LORD of hostes, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation, these threescore and ten years?

13. And the LORD answered the Angel that talked with me, with good words, and comfortable words.

As hitherto Christ hath been represented in his Kingly and Prophetical Office in this vision, so here he is represented in his Priestly Office, upon this information interceding for his afflicted Church, as if he were afflicted with her, and passionately expostulating, that though the seventy years of their captivity were long since expired, yet the Lord, who easily could do it, had not put an end to that sad dispensation, and let forth some effects of his mercy toward her, when all others were at ease: To which a good answer is returned. *Doct. 1.* Albeit Christ do not alwayes appear in glorious acts of power for his people in trouble, to prove his remembering of them; yet it is a ground of comfort and token of good, to know that the Church and her afflictions have a room in Christs heart, and are matter of his intercession to the Father; therefore the scope of this vision

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is to assure them of Christs intercession for them, as the ground of many promises to be performed in due time; 2. Christ by vertue of the Covenant of Redemption, past betwixt the Father and him, and the Covenant of grace made with sinners in him, did exercise his Office of Mediator and Intercession for his people, making the price to be paid forth-coming in all ages, even before his incarnation; for here at this time, he is interceding for the Church of the Jewes. 3. Christ the Intercessor is engaged to see the Churches good, and hath perfect knowledge of her affaires; and what her case requires, which puts him to appear for her in every necessity, and that very affectionately, as if himselfe were concerned and engaged in her trouble, all this is here said of this Intercessor, for he looks on her as his charge, for which he must make account, as being *the Angel, or, Messenger of the Lord* for that end: his information received in the former verse shewes, that he is neither ignorant nor careless of her case; his interceding upon that information unrequired, and answering it, as calling him to do his duty, shewes how mercifull and faithfull an High Priest he is, and his pleading *how long? &c.* doth not import any distrust in him, or quarrelling of his Father, but his deep resentment of his Churches calamitie, and his cordiall affection to her and her welfare. These for whom Christ intercedes are not the perishing world, but his own in the world, and his visible Church for their sake, that she may be so dealt with as may most conduce for their bringing in and training up for heaven; for, here he prays for *Jerusalem and the cities of Judah*, as representing the visible Gospel-Church, and as being the visible Church wherein the elect were brought forth to God. 4. Christ in his intercession will not quit any of his or his peoples rights, but will plead them to the full, and keep up his whole claime, however matters seem to go; for however they were now scarce one City, yet he pleads for *Jerusalem and the cities of Judah*, for all the people; and is accordingly answered, *v. 16, 17.* for things are never desperate, which are within his claime. 5. Albeit Christ doth intercede for his own that are not within the fold that they may be brought in, yet then have we clear ground to make use of, and apply the benefit of Christs intercession to our comfort, when we are engaged in the way of our duty; for no mention is made of them who returned not from captivity; but only of *Jerusalem and the cities of Judah*. 6. Christs way of intercession teacheth his people

people to come through him to God in faith as to one compleatly able to help them in all extremities; for he prays to him as *Lord of baster*; who could remove all impediments out of the way of his peoples happinesse. 8. Such are fit for receiving the comfortable fruits of Christs intercession, as are humble, and made to stoop and expect them from free mercy; for Christ intercedes on no other termes, but that *he will have mercy*, which is extended to the miserable, and such as are sensible of their being such. 9. Tender mercy, and bowels of compassion in God, is the carver out of what shall be the lot of his humble people; for Christ comprehends all they are to receive in its fountaine, which is *mercy*. 10. Such as Christ the Mediator taketh charge of he will not have them behinde with any for happinesse; for, so much doth his complaining that mercy was not shewed to the Church, while as others were at ease, teach us. 11. Christ doth tenderly weigh the measure and continuance of the Churches trouble; so, doth he here; *Against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years*. 12. Albeit the Lord for a time let out displeasure against his Church for sinne, yet his ordinary way of dispensation in the world, and his peculiar favour to his Church, will allow her to expect a vicissitude and change of her hard condition into a better, after his prefixed time for wrath is over; for after the seventy years captivity Christ pleads, that *indignation should resolve in mercy*. 13. The sad effects of a captivity may last long time after the captivity is over; that so the fruites of sinne may be well studied; that a people so used may be stirred up more earnestly to seek God, and that Christ may have much occasion to let forth his bowels of affection, and his fathers through him; for here, after the seventy years are over, the Lord yet *had not mercy on Jerusalem*, to wit, in that measure of outward effects they had enjoyed before their captivity; and was promised to them after it. 14. Christ is such an Intercessor, as even when he takes most desperate-like causes in hand, he will be heard, and must be satisfied in his desires; for, *the Lord answered the Angel that talked with me*. 15. The answer which Christ the Intercessor receives will be satisfactory and comfortable, it will be such as he accounts good; and so should we, and being good should be comfortable, and will prove so in the end; for he is answered with *good and comfortable words*. 16. A Church may receive rich fruites of Christs intercession, although at first they be not delivered,

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vered, nor get the rest which they expect, to wit, when they are led to spiritual things instead of temporal which they want, and get promises renewed of what is in due time to be performed: for Christs answer here is good and comfortable words, or promises concerning spiritual things, and their own enlargement, after published.

Verf. 14. *So the Angel that communed with me, said unto me, Cry thou, saying; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Sion with a great jealousy.*

This good answer is not kept up by Christ the Intercessor, but the summe of it is presently given to the Prophet to publish unto the Church for her comfort, it containeth severall particulars; whereof the first is, a commission to publish the Lords affection to his Church, to do her good, and his indignation and griefe (speaking after the manner of men) for the injuries sustained by her, no lesse then any man hath for his married and beloved wife. *Doff. 1.* Christs fidelity and affection to his people for whom he intercedes, is such, that he will not long keep up from them the fruits of his purchase and intercession in their need: this is represented to us in this, that a good answer and good newes being given, before (so to say) he read the packet, he posts it away to the Church by the Prophet, *So the Angel that communed with me said, Cry thou, &c.* 2. Good newes concerning the Church are to be expected from heaven as the fruit of Christs intercession, and are to be read in the Word and messages put in the mouth of his commission-servants from day to day: So here, these good newes are the answer which Christ received to his prayer, and are sent from Heaven to be published by the Prophet. 3. It is incumbent to these who are employed as Ambassadors betwixt Christ and his people, to publish his minde with such zeal and alacrity, such affection and confidence, as may in some measure represent his great love who sent the message, his delight to do them good, and his real purpose to perform what he saith: for this cause is the Prophet here commanded, to cry this message. 4. The Lords relation to his people is a marriage-tie, which is not broken by every fault, nor cast off in sad dispensations: for, his being jealous for her,

for, importeth, that she was the wife still, for a'l she had done, or had come upon her. 5. Albeit the Lord will neither hold strokes off his people when they need or deserve them, nor deliver them till his time comes; yet his marriage-affection doth resent all their trouble and injuries done to them, so that they grieve not, nor are wronged, but his heart bleeds, as in due time will appear in effects; *I am (saith he) jealous for Jerusalem and Sion with a great jealousy.*

Verf. 15. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction:

A second branch of the answer given in commission to the Prophet, holds forth Gods great displeasure against the enemies of the Church for all their quiet condition, because that when God intended to correct his people by their means, they had proven severe executioners. *Doff. 1.* As it is an heathenish mark to live at ease in an uncertain world, especially when the Church is in trouble; so Gods displeasure against heathens, or men of heathenish disposition and practices in afflicting the Church of God may be very great, and ready to break forth in due time, notwithstanding their easie life and quiet estate, *I am very sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease.* 2. The Lords hottest displeasure against his own people will be found very easie when it is compared with his severity against his enemies; therefore however the Jewes be called to consider it in it selfe, as *sore displeasure*, yet being thus compared with the lot of others: it is said, *I was but a little displeased.* 3. Albeit none of the Churches enemies, and instruments of Gods chastisements, can transgresse the bounds of his purpose and permission, to adde any thing to the Churches trouble, yet as they go beyond his revealed will and approbation, so they use to execute Gods purpose, with such cruell mindes and so destructive intentions, as renders them highly guilty before God; that, *They helped forward the affliction*, when God was but a little displeased, they had more cruelty in their way then God determined to be executed, and they intended and aimed at the utter destruction of the Church, when God intended only to correct and

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and purge them. 4. As the cruell designes of the Churches enemies will faile them, so their severity in executing the Lords controversie, is a token of Gods fore anger against them, and of their approaching ruine; for, the Church is now delivered in part, beyond their expectations and desires, and this their way, speaks God very sore displeased, which will not long conceale.

Verſ. 16. Therefore thus ſaith the LORD, I am returned to Jeruſalem with mercies: my houſe ſhall be built in it, ſaith the LORD of hoſtes, and a line ſhall be ſtretched forth upon Jeruſalem.

A third branch of this answer and meſſage, holds forth ſome promiſed effects of his declared love to his people, to wit, that the Lord, being now reconciled with them, the Temple ſhould be built: and their City and wall alſo in *Nehemiah* time (ſignified by the ſtretching out of a workmans line to ſquare his building by, when he works) and ſo in effect promiſeth to erect their publick worſhip, and Politick State. *Doct. 1.* The Lord who ſpeaks comfortably of his love to the Church in her trouble, will in due time let forth reall and convincing proofes and fruits thereof; This promiſe comes in on the back of the former concerning his love to his people, and hatred againſt her afflictors, with a *therefore*, as minding to give a reall proof of what he ſaid. 2. As the Lords preſence with his people as a reconciled God, is a chief fruit of his love; ſo temporal calamities will not hinder his manifeſting of his being reconciled, in his own due times: for after he had been angry with them, and had gone away, as to any outward manifeſtation of his preſence, he ſureth them again, as a great proof of his love. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I am returned to Jeruſalem.* 3. The Lords furniture and train when he comes to dwell in his Church, are tender mercies of all ſorts, without which his Church could not enjoy him, nor he dwell long with her; and which ſhall rejoyce over any other diſpenſation he may let out upon her, *I am returned to Jeruſalem with mercies*, ſaith he. 4. The Lord may be reconciled with, and in the midſt of his people, laden with mercy, when yet all things are but in the promiſes, going to bud forth in performance, *I am returned*, ſaith the Lord, when yet

yet neither the City nor house were built. 5. The setting up of Gods house and worship amongst a sinfull unworthy people, is a chief evidence of his presence, and fruit of his tender mercy; *My house shall be built in it*; is the first fruit of his *returning with mercies*. 6. Albeit the building of Gods house, and setting up his worship, be the Churches duty, the neglect whereof is her great sinne; yet it is the Lord who only can undertake to set it up and hold it up, and the humble follower of his duty, may be encouraged by considering that what is their task, God is also engaged by promise to see it done, therefore what they were commanded to do by *Haggai*, here God promiseteth to see it done when they set about it, *My house shall be built in it*, saith the Lord of hostes. 7. Where Gods work goes first on as mens chief care, their own particulars will succeed the better, although they were to raise out of the very dust and ruines of long desolation; therefore it is promised in the second place, *and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem*.

Verf. 17. Cry yet, saying, Thus saith the LORD of hostes, My cities through prosperity, shall yet be spread abroad, and the LORD shall yet comfort Sion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem.

The last branch of this answer (for which the Prophet gets a new commission) containes yet more effects of his love; that whereas now they were but a few and poor people, so that they behoved to bring people from the countrey to inhabit *Jerusalem*, *Neb. 11.* The Lord promises that all their Cities should not only be peopled, but should overflow with men and prosperity, (as some shadow of the enlargement of Christs Kingdome under the Gospel) and that by all these dispensations he would comfort this people, and confirme them in that priviledge of being his chosen people, notwithstanding their temporal rejection. *Doff. 1.* When the Lord hath said much for the comfort of his people, he hath still yet more to say, to be as confidently avowed, as if he had made but promise of one thing; and his servants need much up-stirring to search into the riches of Christ, and not to weary in bringing it forth unto his people: therefore after the former commission and promises, *Cry yet* saith the Lord. 2. Though there be many things that seem to lie

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lie in the way of promises, such as guilt, difficulties, length of time, &c. which may make performance seem improbable, if not impossible: yet the faith both of Preachers and people ought to step over these, and whatever appear to the contrary, the promise is to be published and believed; this is imported in the many *yets* in this commission and promise: *Cry yet, my cities shall yet spread, &c.* shewing that whatever be said to the contrary these things should be. 3. When God is reconciled with a people, all things that concerns them becomes the Lords; in a special manner, to get protection and blessing from him; for now their cities are his: *My Cities.* 4. Though the Lords people reconciled with him, may lie low for a time, yet his blessing can exalt them beyond all expectation; *My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad.* 5. Though the Lords people seem oft-times to be stricken with incurable and grievous wounds, yet the Lord both can, and in due time will comfort them over all their sorrowes, and make them forget their miseries; *And the Lord shall yet comfort Zion.* 6. The great comfort that arises to the Lords people from all his gracious dispensations, is that by them they are confirmed in the priviledge of being his peculiar people, and standing in his favour, which by sad afflictions seemed to be annulled and made void: for their comfort is, that by these dispensations he shall yet choose Jerusalem, or give a new proofe of it.

Vers. 18. *Then lift I up mine eyes; and saw, and behold, foure hornes.*

19. *And I said unto the Angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the hornes which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.*

20. *And the LORD shewed me foure Carpenters.*

21. *Then said I, What come these to do? And he spake, saying, These are the hornes which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head, but these are come to fray them, to cast out the hornes of*

the Gentiles, which lift up their horns over the Land of Judah to scatter it.

In this second vision, that part of the former message concerning Gods displeasure against the Churches enemies, is confirmed, and the removal of all obstructions in the way of performance of promises is held forth, the summe whereof is, that as when God purposed to exercise and chasten them, strong and fierce enemies had arisen from all quarters of the world, and had scattered the whole body of Gods people, both of *Israel* and *Judah*, (which enemies are represented to the Prophet, and under the type of *hornes*, alluding to the custome of souldiers, who had iron hornes in their helmets for terrour, or to beasts whom enemies resemble in cruelty,) so albeit the *Jews* could not resist them, nor shake off the yoke till their trial was perfected; yet the Lord had other enemies and fitted instruments ready in all quarters, to be terrible unto these oppressors, and cast them out of their power, and to break and crush it, which also is represented to the Prophet under the type of *Carpenters*, or *Hammer-men*, able to break and cut off these hornes, and both these types are explained by the Lord unto him. *Doff.* 1. When greatest promises are given to the Church, her faith may have sorest essayes, and greatest obstructions may appear in the way of performance, from potent, cruel and beastly enemies on all quarters, concurring together for her ruine; & not only threatening, but who have actually exercised so much cruelty, as may put her in feare for the future; for, when all these promises are made; *Then I lift up mine eyes, and behold, foure hornes, which have scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem.* 2. As difficulties invironing the Church would be seen by her, that she may be stirred up to her dutie: so the best sight of them, and expounding of their way is had from God, whereby she will see them to be under an over-ruling Providence, and that God takes notice of every circumstance of her trouble; therefore the Prophet is made to see these hornes, and albeit their trouble from enemies was a known thing, yet the Lord will discover it in vision, and expound it himself upon the Prophets question, to shew that God knew, and had an hand in what they did. 3. Albeit the Lord take notice of all the cruelties exercised upon his Church, yet in a special manner be

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heresents the enemies designe; to cut the face of a Church from off the earth; for, they scattered *Judah*, &c. as beasts tosse what they get upon their hornes into the winde, and for this cause it is, that the scattering of *Jerusalem*, where the Temple stood, is considered by it self; though it be a part of *Judah*. 4. Albeit the Lord do not alike soon deliver all his afflicted, yea, albeit these who were last afflicted be first delivered, yet the sufferings of all are in his heart; and not forgotten in their trouble; and present sufferers have the advantage of all the Churches former trouble, whose wounds do all bleed on every new stroak; therefore albeit *Judah* get the present comfort of this vision, as appears, v. 21. yet the Prophet is made to see, that the hornes have scattered *Judah*, *Israel* and *Jerusalem*, not only because some *Israelites* had cleaved unto *Judah*; since the renting of the ten tribes from the house of *David*, but to shew that *Israels* troubles were laid up in his heart, to be forth-coming for their good in due time, and that *Judah* had this advantage against her enemies, that *Israel* had suffered by them also. 5. Such as have opened eyes may discern as much for the encouragement of the Church, as can be seen against her: that God is powerful to crush all her enemies, and hath as many effectual meanes for that end on all quarters; as they have power and confederates: for, the Prophet is made to see *four* *Carpenters*, in opposition to the *four* *hornes*. 6. However difficulties and enemies may easily be seen; yet help against them can be shewed by God only; for whereas it is said of the hornes that the Prophet saw them; it is said of their help expressly; *The Lord shewed me four Carpenters*. 7. Christ the King, Priest and Prophet of his Church, is very God, equal with his Father; for here the Angel, who all this while had communed with, and informed the Prophet in vision, and who had interceded for the Church, is *Jehovah*; *The Lord shewed me*. 8. No successe which enemies have had against the Church, during her trial and exercise will assure them against a day of vengeance, or make them stand before the fitted instruments thereof; for, however these hornes have scattered *Judah*, so that no man did lift up his head, yet these are come to fray them, and cast out the hornes of the Gentiles: The instruments of vengeance will easily affright them who had been the terror of this world, and will cast them out, not only from possessing the Churches inheritance which they had usurped, but from their

own kingdomes and power which they had employed so ill. 9. Whatever other wickednesse, persecutors of the Church may be guilty of, or whatever quarrel the instruments of their ruine may have against them; yet the Lords great controversie which fills their cup, and which the Church themselves, and the world about should look on as the cause of their ruine, is their opposition unto, and their oppressing of the people of God; therefore is it the third time set down in this vision, that they lift up their horne over the land of Judah to scatter it.

CHAP. II.

IN this Chapter we have a third vision shewed unto the Prophet, wherein under the type of a man measuring Jerusalem, v. 1, 2. and attended with Angels, v. 3. is promised the future enlargement of Jerusalem, v. 4. and her safety, v. 5. the application and use of which vision is held forth in a threefold exhortation, 1. To the Jewes who remained at Babylon, that they would return to their land, v. 6, 7. in regard, that Christ was out of his love to them, to reckon with their enemies, which he would easily effectuate to their satisfaction and confirmation, v. 8, 9. 2. To the Jewes who were returned, that they would rejoyce because of his presence among them, v. 10. because of the accession that should be of many Nations to the Church, v. 11. and because the Lord would yet confirm their election, to be his chosen people in their own land, v. 12. 3. To all mis-believers of the promise and opposers of his Church, that they should stand in awe, and compesce their fainting or fury, v. 13.

Ver. 1. **I** Lift up mine eyes again, and looked, and behold, a man with a measuring line in his hand.

2. Then said I: Whither goest thou? And he said unto me, To measure Jerusalem, to see what is the breadth

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breadth thereof, and what is the length thereof;

3. *And behold, the Angel that talked with me, went forth, and another Angel went out to meet him;*

4. *And said unto him, Runne, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as townes without walls; for the multitude of men and cattel therein*

Here is promised unto the Church, that however they were now a few people to inhabit the city or countrey, and destitute of cattel as well as men, yet they should so increase, as that the walls of *Jerusalem* should not contain them, but they should dwell without the precincts thereof, and spread themselves into the countrey and villages, hereby prefiguring the future enlargement of the Church, beyond what was under the Old Testament. This is represented unto the Prophet under the type of Christ, as a man with a measuring line, declaring unto the Prophet his purpose to build and set bounds to his own Church, and who being attended by Angels, sends one of them to the Prophet with this message to be communicated unto the Church, for to encourage them to go on in the work, and to invite the scattered Jewes to come home and joyne with their brethren.

Dott. 1. Such as would see the true case and condition of the Church, had need of elevated and spiritual mindes, enlightened by God; for, *Zechariah lift up his eyes and looked*, being enlightened of God in this vision; and saw the Churches case far otherwise then the case of the city, looked on by a natural eye at that time, could promise. 2. These who see *Jerusalem*, and the Church well, will see Christ still employed about her, and careful of her well-being, and that her prosperity is the great business of heaven, about which Christ and Angels are busie, and of this Christ would have his Church assured; for, here he looked again after the former vision, wherein he had seen Christ, and behold, a man with a measuring line, &c. to wit, Christ himself in humane shape, who is busie measuring the city, going forth to it, and making to work; and another Angel, (one of many attending him) went out to meet him in this work: and command is given that the Church know this,

Run, spake, &c. that this man is Christ, appeareth; in that it is he who hath command of Angels, v. 3. 4. for he who spake to the Prophet, v. 2. is the *Angel that talked with him*, v. 3. 3. It is the duty of all the Lords people, and particularly his Commission-servants, to be humbly and carefully diligent to search out the Lords minde in his sayings and Providences: and for that end, as to search into his Word, so to present many suites unto himself; for here the Prophet, seeing Christ at work, desires to be informed; *Then said I, Whither goest thou?* 4. Christ hath the bounds of his Church at his disposal and measuring, he hath a bounding charter granted by the Father, which no opposition shall be able to retrain; for he alone hath the *measuring line*, v. 1. He can designe the *length and breadth of Jerusalem*, v. 2. and can irrevocably declare the enlargement thereof, v. 4. 5. As the Lord can easily enlarge his Church from a small beginning, so it is his purpose under the New Testament, not only to extend the pale of his Church further then to the Nation of the Jewes, but still to enlarge and make his Kingdome come from Nation to Nation, till all Israel be saved, and the fulnesse of the Gentiles come in, and the Kingdomes of the earth become the Kingdomes of the Lord, &c. *For here in the letter, Jerusalem (now small) shall be inhabited as towns without walls, for the multitude of men and cattle therein*; and by this type the enlargement of the Gospel-Church is held forth, which we are still commanded to pray for. 6. As the Lord may employ whom he pleaseth, even young men, and make them fit and able for his work; so whosoever are employed by him, ought to be nimble and active in going about his directions in their office, and to be abased in their own eyes before him who employeth them. So, here the Prophet is called *this young man*, either in respect of his age, or because he ought to be nimble in his office as a boy, or in respect of his abasing himself, and being nothing in his own eyes, when he saw Christ and the created Angel.

Vers. 5. *For I, saith the LORD, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her.*

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Whereas the former promises of *Jerusalems* enlargement, as townes without walls seemed to import, that they should not be in safety; the Lord presents this, and promises that his protection should make them as safe, as if they were encompassed with a wall of fire, (as *Israel* was, when the pillar of fire stood betwixt them and the Egyptians, *Ex.* 14. as *Elisha* in *Dosban*, *2 Kings* 6. 17. or as travellers in the wilderness kept off lions and wilde beasts, by building fires round about them;) and that they should have the comfort of his glorious presence, dwelling in the midst of them, making them glorious, and assuring them of protection, *Doff.* 1. One promise of Christ, and proof of his love, will still call for another to make that sure, and so on till the Church get performance once for all; therefore, the former promise of enlargement calls for this new one of protection, and gets it. 2. When the Lord sees it fit to exempt his people from trouble, he can in most unsafe times, and when they are weakest, safely protect them, by bridling enemies by his secret hand, by making the Church finde favour in their eyes, or making their attempts as ineffectual, as if they would essay to go through a fire; and even when his Church tastes of trouble, yet she is not secluded from his protection, nor exposed to the will of enemies, and what they do against her shall be as prejudicial to them, as if they had gone through a burning fire; *I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about*, doth import all this. 3. As the Lords presence with and amongst a people is their greatest glory, and makes them glorious; so it is a pledge of their protection, that he will secure his own habitation, and put a defence on his own glory, whatever they be; for, where he is *a wall of fire*, there he is *the glory in the midst of her*, and therefore *a wall*.

Vers. 6. Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the North, saith the LORD: for I have spread you abroad as the foure windes of the heaven saith the LORD.

7. Deliver thy self, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.

This doctrine concerning *Jerusalems* enlargement and safety,

is by Christ applied to several sorts of persons for use, in a three-fold exhortation: 1. To the Jewes, who having in seventy yeares time forgotten their own countrey, many of them also being borne in captivity, and being taken up with the pleasures of *Babylon*, and looking on all as desperate in their own countrey, did voluntarily stay still when the rest came away; these are again and again exhorted with all speed on all hazards, to return and help to build the City and dwell in it, that so that people might be conspicuous til Christ should come, who would enlarge his Church, and that they might share with the rest in these promises. In this exhortation two reasons are touched: 1. That their scattering into *Babel*, and into all other corners, (of which see, *Ezek. 5. 12. Jer. 4. 11.*) was a judgement, and therefore not to be sure under, especially now when God in pity to them, was restoring them. 2. That being *Zion*, it was not seemly to see them in *Babylon*, when they might be at *Jerusalem*. *Diss.* 1. It may encourage every one in their station to put their hand to help forward Christs work, and to come and joyne in it, when they consider that he is about it, in whose hand nothing will miscarry, and Christs kindnesse to his Church, may invite all to come and joyne with her; for, the scope and drift of the preceding vision is declared to be the encouragement of the Jewes, to go on in the work, and an invitation of their brethren to leave all and come unto them. 2. The worst and bitterest of conditions may in proceesse of time, be late down under by unsensible souls, with stupidity, and such an outgate made of them, as they will be quitting hope of better; for, these people who could not think of going to *Babel*, have now sealed themselves in it, as their home, and need call upon call to come out of it; *Ho, ho, flee, deliver thy self.* 3. It is an usual sin in men, through negligence, love of the world, prejudice at the way of God, and unwillingnesse to embatque in difficulties, to neglect their own true good, and their duty for enlargement of the Kingdome of Christ: for these causes it was that the Jewes need so many calls to leave *Babylon*, and come to *Jerusalem* to joyne in the work of God, and enjoy the meanes of salvation. 4. Albeit the commands of God seem many times unjust to our sense, and obedience thereunto very prejudicial, yet upon better information, we will finde that our advantage lies in speedy obedience upon any hazard; therefore the call to these lingering Jewes, is not only to come forth, but to flee and deliver thy

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thy selfe, or, make an escape on any termes, as out of a great hazard, albeit they thought it their best to abide there. 5. As the Lord, in shewing mercy to his people, calls to minde their former afflictions, that he may be so much the more kinde; so however the Lord may make the place of his peoples captivity easie to them, yet it is a judgement-like disposition, when a people chooseth that for their rest, and ourgate, which God hath cast them in, in wrath, and as a punishment for sin, however it may seem to promise ease; therefore the Lord himselfe mindes their scattering when he is to shew mercie; and mindes them of their scattering as a fruit of his wrath, that they should not think to dwell still there; *Ho, ho, come forth, for I have spread you abroad as the foure winde of the heaven, saith the Lord.*

6. The Churches serious considering of her Profession, privilege and dignity, may discover unto her, how unbecoming many of her practices are, how little she adorne her profession, or walks worthy of her high calling: therefore doth he name her *Zion*, that it might shame her from dwelling with the daughter of *Babylon*. 7. Unnecessary and voluntary conversing with idolaters, is an evil full of hazard to the people of God, considering how much they lose by neglecting better company, what danger there is of infection by them, and of participating with them in their judgements; therefore is *Zion* to deliver her selfe, who dwelleth with the daughter of *Babylon*.

Verf. 8. For thus saith the LORD of hostes, After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you; for he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye.

A third reason is expressly subjoyned to the exhortation, to wit, that after Christ had visited and afflicted his own people; and especially after he hath begun to make his glory shine in restoring them, he is also sent by his Father to punish their enemies, and restrain them from impeding the perfecting of the Churches glory, by doing whereof he would make known his affection to the Church, and his resentment of her afflictions; and therefore it was not safe for them to stay in *Babel*, nor fit to stick at impediments. So that by the glory here we are to un-

understand partly the Church, which are his glory, and among whom he manifests his glory, *Isa. 4. 5.* and *Dan. 8. 9.* in the Original, and after whole afflictions God would, out of his love to her, reckon with her enemies; and partly, his glory manifested in her restoration, *as v. 5.* after the breaking forth whereof God would engage against enemies, that they should not hinder the perfecting of it. *Dott. 1.* Christ is the fit and faithful Interpreter of his Fathers will, the revealer of his counsel, and he who seeth it executed; for here he tells what *the Lord of hostes saith*, and is sent to see the Fathers will done. 2. The Church will finde it to be a very unsafe course for her to joyne and comply with her enemies, even although these who do otherwise seem to expose themselves to great hazard; for, albeit the Jewes in *Judea* were environed with enemies, and those in *Babylon* seemed secure, yet wrath was to come there, and therefore it was their best to flee. 3. The Church of God is the society, where he sets forth his glory more then among all the world beside, and in doing good to whom he delights to be glorified: and fetches arguments so to do from his own glory, when there is no cause in her: therefore she is here called *the glory*. 4. As it is no mark of the true Church to be exempted from afflictions; and as she loseth none of her splendour in his eyes, by any afflictions: so the Churches afflictions are fore-runners of judgement on the world, and her enemies; and when he begins to let forth his glory in her, after a storme, he will see that no enemies shall impede him in carrying it on: for she hath been afflicted, and is *the glory* for all that, and after *the glory he hath sent me to the nations which spoiled you*. 5. As Gods severity against his people takes not away his sympathie with them in their afflictions; so his sympathy makes the Churches trouble go very near his heart, which he will in due time prove upon the instruments thereof; for this is the cause of his going unto the nations; *they spoiled you*; and the reason is brought from his sympathy: for, *be that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye* a touch of them on any part, is to his sympathy, a touch of the apple of his eye, which is a most tender part.

Ver. 9. *Forbehold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoile to their servants; and*

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and ye shall know that the LORD of hostes hath sent me.

This reason is further enlarged and cleared from the manner of Christs taking order with their enemies, to wit, that though they be great in power, and have none to oppose them: yet if he do but shake his hand and give the signe, or toss them a little, their very servants whom they formerly conquered and kept in slavery, shall undo and lord it over them, and possesse their goods, wherein the Jewes were actors in part, both in the dayes of *Esther*, and at home when they brought their enemies about, who had concurred in afflicting them, into subjection. The effect of all which shall be a confirmation of them by this new experiment, that Christ is sent of the Father to declare and execute these promises, as Protector of his Church. *Doff.*

1. Albeit when we hear Gods Word speaking for the Church, or against her enemies, we are ready to question: *How can these things be?* yet Omnipotency will easily finde a way to fulfil promises or threatenings, and can take the most contemptible, and successfully employ them against most potent Conquerours, who have left none (as they think) in the world, to take order with them: for, *behold, I will shake mine hand upon them, and they shall be a spoile to their servants:* and to confirm this, he declareth himself to be the Lord of hostes. 1. It is the Lords way, not only to bring down oppressing enemies, but so to do it, as may poure most ignominie upon them, and let all the world see their vanity and folly, who placed their security in any thing beside God: for, *they shall be a spoile to thy servants.* 3. As it is not enough to have a braine notional knowledge of God, and what he hath revealed, unless it be experimentally engraven upon the heart: so even the people of God may have their own questionings, concerning Gods care of them, and concerning what he hath said in his Word, till by performance and experimental proofs he put it out of all controversie, which in due time he will do; for, when this is wrought, then they begin to know as they ought, and by this experiment he makes them certain, and ye shall know. 4. As every dispensation of God ought to instruct and fixe lessons in our heart: so a special lesson to be read and learned by the Church, is Gods good will in employing his Son for their good, and Christs being on foot to procure

procure good tidings to her, and let her see them really performed, he being employed by the omnipotent God for that effect; *And ye shall know that the Lord of hostes hath sent me.*

Verf. 10. Sing and rejoyce, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD.

The second exhortation directed to the Jewes that were returned from captivity (which may serve also as an argument to these in *Babel* to come and partake of their promised happiness) is, that however they were in a low condition, yet they should rejoyce and expresse their joy by singing. This he presseth from three grounds, whereof the first is, that Christ would come and take up his habitation in the midst of them, not only typically or in legall shadowes, or by his grace and Spirit only, but that in the fulnesse of time he would also come in person, and become man and dwell among them. *Doff. 1.* No difficulty or straites can take away from the Church the true cause of her joy, nor excuse her for not rejoycing in it; for when the Jewes are now a contemptible handfull, deserted by their brethren, vexed by their enemies, and some of themselves conspiring with them, *Nehem. 6. 17, 18. and 13. 4.* yet she is called to this duty; *Sing and rejoyce, O daughter of Zion.* 2. The Lords own presence in and with his people, is his choice and matchlesse gift, which he is willing to give before any other thing, and which as he will not disdain to bestow in his peoples lowest condition; So it is a gift that should occasion much joy and refreshment to them; for when they want many accommodations, the Ark and the cloud, and the company of their brethren, yet this is his great gift wherein they should rejoyce; *Sing and rejoyce, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee.* 3. As the Lords presence with his own chosen people is perpetual, and will bring intimate familiarity and love; so himselfe will be at all the paines to make up this union, he will not, by sinne putting him (as it were) away for a time, be provoked to stay away, and will have this communion still upon the growing hand till they come to full fruition; for he will dwell constantly, and that familiarly *in the midst of thee*, and for this end *I come*, saith he, or am at the paines, I will not be kept away from coming

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coming again; and though they had his presence in some measure before, yet it is still *I come*. 4. It is the great ground of the Churches encouragement, and the fountaine of all other manifestations of God, that the Sonne of God became man, that her Redeemer is God, that he came and dwelt in our nature, and was like us in all things without sin; and that we may tryft with God in the man Christ, and know our tender-hearted surety to be also God over all blessed for ever, and able to save to the uttermost; this incarnation of Christ is it which this promise ultimately points at as the ground of their joy, *Sing, for I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith Jehovah.*

Verf. 11. And many Nations shall be joyned to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hostes hath sent me unto thee.

The second reason of the exhortation, is, because many Nations shall joyne to the Lord and become one Church with them when he is incarnate, by which they should yet further be confirmed that Christ is sent of the Father to be the Mediatour and Redremer of his Church. *Doff. 1.* Whatever encouragement the Lord withholds from his people in following their duty, it is because he purposeth richly to make it up another way; for if the Jewes were discouraged in building the Temple by their brethrens staying behinde, here is a promise of an accession to make that up, *And many Nations shall be joyned to the Lord in that day.* 2. It is the matter of great joy, that by the incarnation of Christ, the partition-wall betwixt Jew and Gentile is cast down, that all Nations without any difference, or distinction, have accessse, and do come to him, and that he makes many to be willing in the day of his power; for this is a new cause of their song, *Many Nations shall be joyned to the Lord.* 3. It doth contribute to set out the glory of Christs Kingdome under the Gospel, that not only he hath elect and converted members of all Nations, without distinction: but that he brings whole Nations in visible Covenant with him, and maketh a whole Nation to become a National visible Church: for so is here prophesied of these dayes, *Many Nations* (and not some of a Nation only) *shall be joyned to the Lord, at least by visible Covenant,*

nant, in that day. 4. Most glorious promises may be mistaken in their performance, by carnall hearts, and not prove so comfortable as indeed they are; for the conversion of the Gentiles, is promised here as the matter of the Jewes joy, and yet it proved a stumbling block to the body of the Nation when it was performed, and will do till the conversion of the Gentiles provoke them to jealousy, *Rom. 11. 11.* 5. A people do then indeed come unto God, when beside their being visibly in Covenant with him, they seek also union with him through faith in his Sonne, and do give themselves up to his obedience, and that they may become his, which the sensible and humble soul ought to look upon, not only as their duty, but as Gods promise; so much doth this Prophecie ultimately point at, *They shall be joyned to the Lord, and shall be my people.* 6. As the Lords presence is that which makes the society of Saints comfortable, were they increasing never so fast; so the more the Church encreaseth, he will let out the more of his presence with her; for in that day of this accession it is added againe, *And I will dwell in the midst of thee.* Much conversion proves him to be present, will draw forth more of his presence, and that will be all the converts joy. 7. As the conversion of the Gentiles to the Church, and removing all obstructions out of their way, is a part of the Messiahs errand to the world; so also much conversion is an ample testimony to Christ, that he is the appointed Mediator sent of the Father, that he hath alluring beauty under seeming deformity, invincible power and vertue managed by apparent weaknesse, and that he hath received gifts for men, even for rebels that he may dwell among them, therefore by this work also, *Thou shalt know that the Lord of hostes hath sent me unto thee,* saith he, to *Sion.*

Verf. 12. And the LORD shall inherit Judah his portion in the holy land, and shall chuse Jerusalem again.

The third reason of the exhortation, speaks more nearly to the present case of the Jewes, for whereas they might, upon the former promise concerning the Gentiles, look upon themselves as rejected, especially having neither the face of a Nation nor Temple, since they were rejected at the Babylonish captivity, there.

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therefore the Lord promisetli that he will gather them from their dispersions, and set them as his peculiar heritage in their own land, and that he will give new documents of their election to be his people, though it seemed now to be interrupted: that so they might be a peculiar habitation for him till he should come in the flesh, if not also pointing at their future conversion and restitution: seeing he speaks of them as an inheritance. *Doff. 1.* As the Lords Covenant entered in with a people may meet with many interruptions, in the visible effects of it, without a dissolution of the bond and tie: so in particular, his relation to the Nation of the Jewes is such as no temporal rejection can utterly make void, for here notwithstanding all that hath come upon them, they keep their titles, and their election stands, and doth yet to this day, as is expounded to us, *Rom. 11. 28, 29.* 2. The Lords people may expect to be no losers by all their troubles, when God comes to repaire and make them up; for Judah after their captivity, gets the holy land, so called, not only because the holy Lord dwelt there, in a peculiar way of presence, and because it was the habitation assigned to his people consecrated to him, and so an holy Nation; but because it was a type of Heaven. 3. The Lords Church is his peculiar portion, which he separates for himselfe from the world, to deal with them singularly; *The Lord shall inherit Judah his portion,* he will take them for his heritage and portion, and use them so. 4. The Lords free choice and election of his people is of such consequence to them, and may meet with so many assaults and dispensations seeming to brangle it, that there is need of frequent confirmations and tokens for good, to establish them in the faith of it: for this cause is this promise, *And shall choose Jerusalem again.*

Verf. 13. Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation.

The third exhortation is directed to all opposers of these promises, whether misbelievers among the Jewes, who might be reasoning against this doctrine, or enemies, who might boast to make them prove vaine; these are compelled, and commanded silence, in their doublings and brags, seeing God was begun to appear out of Heaven for his people, as one not unmindfull
of

of his promise. *Doff. 1.* The promises of God may oft-times be little heard in the Church for her comfort, by reason of the tumult of fightings within, and of seares and opposition without, for so is here imported. *2.* A right considering how much frailty appears in our distrusting, how weak all opposition is, and how strong the Lord is, and how far wronged he is in his glory, by misbelieving his promises, may silence, and crie down our unbelieve and compesse enemies fury; for the Lord here so teaches, *Be silent, O all flesh before the Lord*, the word importing such a silence, as when a Master comes in among scholars, or when a Prince appears. *3.* Albeit Gods presence in Heaven, and among his people, might silence unbelief, and terrifie opposers, considering that he is there, though he appear not, and that he will in due time appear; yet it may much more shew the folly of these wayes, when God hath appeared and begun to work; for, his appearing once should confirme faith, and assure his people of a compleat issue; and put enemies out of all hope of gaining their point, yea and assure them that their begun disappointment and ruine is a pledge of more, whatever strength or power they have; this may silence all flesh before God, *For he is raised up out of his holy habitation.*

CHAP. III.

IN this Chapter we have a fourth vision, tending to encourage *Joshua* and all the Priests and people to go on in the work, notwithstanding all the machinations of Satan, stirring up enemies and taking advantage of their sinnes to provoke the Lord against them, and keep them in their low condition: wherein Satan accusing *Joshua*, *v. 1.* is resisted by Christ, *v. 2.* who takes away the ground of his accusation, *v. 3, 4.* and restores the Priestly dignity, *v. 5.* with a renovation of the Covenant concerning his office, *v. 6, 7.* And because *Joshua*, in his building of the Temple and office, was but a type of Christ, therefore he and the people are comforted by a promise of the incarnation of Christ the true Priest, *v. 8.* and the foundation-stone of the spiritual Temple; who by his Priestly office should perfectly expiate sinne, *v. 9.* and be the author of true peace, *v. 10.*

CHAP. 3. *Prophecie of ZECHARIAH.* 65

Verf. 1. **A**Nd he shewed me *Joshua the High Priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him.*

For our right taking up of this vision, we are to consider that as heretofore the Lord hath discovered unto the Church how he would remove great outward difficulties and opposition in the way of the Temple-building; so here they are lifted up to consider of higher and stronger enemies, even Satan, who not only stirres up enemies to the work, but will take occasion of their sinnes, for which they had smarted, to plead against them and the work in their hand, unlesse Christ interposed. And as heretofore the encouragements were given generally to all, so here particularly to *Joshua* the High Priest; partly because he was a chief man in building the Temple, and therefore as he would be much set on by Satan, so his confirmation and sustaining was needfull; that he might encourage all others; partly, as being a Priest and representing all the inferior Priests, as appears from v. 8, the contemptibleness of whose Office at that time; was a great discouragement to themselves and the people, and therefore new promises are made of adorning the Priestly Office, till Christ the substance of that type should come: together with an instructing of them to do their office better, and a promised reward to the faithfull discharger of his trust; and partly, as in his office standing before the Lord in name of the whole people, and therefore gets promises made to him common with them: This being taken alongst will make all the purpose clearer. So in this verse we have represented unto the Prophet, the impediment lying in the way of the work and of the instruments thereof, to wit, that while *Joshua* is employed in his Office, for himselfe and the people, before the Angell, representing Christ whose type and Minister he was; Satan, the Churches speciall enemy, does what he can against him, by interposing his accusation to hinder his acceptance, and plead him not worthy to do such a work, and so sets him to stand there as a delinquent before his Judge. Doct. 1. As the Lords people going on in his work, will see difficulty arising after difficulty

to obstruct their way; so is there in Christ sufficiency of encouragement, against all of them; for so much doth the scope of this vision reach; after all the difficulties represented in the former visions, here is a new difficulty, and Christ also answering it. 1. The deepest and subtlest plots of all opposers of the Church are most clearly known to Christ, who will either immediately crush them, or make them known to his Church, that she may make her use of them; for *He shewed me Joshua, &c.* as a case not unknown to him. 3. It is the duty of Gods servants, especially in hard times, to be much with God, and found in their duty whatever may come; to make much use of Christ for coming speed at Gods hand; to set themselves always in their duty, as in his sight, and to study to be approved of him: All which is imported in his posture, he was *standing before the Angel of the Lord*, who is the same with *Jehovah*, v. 2. to wit, Christ called an *Angel*, not in regard of his nature (for he took not upon him the nature of Angels,) but in regard of his office, being sent of the Father, (as the word signifies) for the redemption and salvation of his people. 4. Such as see through all the opposition made unto the Church, and would have the right use of any opposition they see, would look higher then any visible enemy, even to spiritual wickednesse in high places acting in them, who can be opposed only by spiritual weapons, and to Satan getting much advantage by their own sinnes provoking God against them; for, so is revealed to the Prophet, *Satan chief to resist him*. 5. Satan is a great enemy, as to every godly soul in particular, so especially to the restoring and building of the Church, and to such as are eminently instrumental therein, and to a Ministry, that so they may be discouraged and made uselesse; for, *he resists Joshua the High Priest*, who was eminent in building the Temple, and represented all the Priests and people. 6. Satan hath great advantage of the Lords people, by reason of his subtilty and power, and especially by reason of their guilt, if Christ did not interpose; for, he is *standing at his right hand* to resist him, which forme of speech imports not only ability to hinder his enterprises (which are done by the right hand) but as having great advantage, as seeming to favour a just cause, in pleading for Gods justice, and therefore it should seem he ought to be successful: Thus the forme of speech seems to be taken, *Psalm 109. 6.* 7. As the Lords people may meet with saddest assaults from Satan in their approaches

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to God, and as the sad fruit of any challenge appears most in being denied access, when they come in a strait, so it is the Churches great advantage, that the Tribunal before which Satan brings his accusation against her, is that where Christ her Advocate and friend sits Judge: this is imported in that *Jehua* was standing before the Angel of the Lord; or Christ, when Satan came to accuse, and in part, appears further afterward.

Verf. 2. *And the LORD said unto Satan, The LORD rebuke thee, O Satan, even the LORD that hath chosen Ierusalem, rebuke thee. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*

In the next place is represented unto the Prophet, Christ who is the Lord, taking the defence of *Jehua*, and by his intercession, (acting as the Angel of the Lord) pleading, that Satan may be rebuked, confounded and restrained in his malicious and cruel designe to destroy them whom God had chosen, and them who having been almost consumed in trouble, were miraculously plucked out and preserved from total ruine. Doct. 1. Christ in his office of mediation and intercession, is the strong refuge of the Church against Satan, who is sufficient to oppose all his machinations, being himselfe God equal with the Father, zealous for, and affectionate to his people and their weal; and the Father being engaged to help him and his, by virtue of the Covenant; for, *The Lord said to Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, even the Lord rebuke thee.* Where *Jehovah* interposeth for *Jehua*, who hath ground to call to *Jehovah* the Father to appear also, and who testifies his zeal by doubling his request. 2. Albeit the ground of Satans accusation of the Lords people before God, and in their own consciences may be true and just: yet his insatiable and cruel malice in prosecuting that controversie to their destruction, and casting out of Gods favour, is so far from being Christs allowance, that it is hateful unto him, and will be effectually suppressed by him. This is imported in his intercession, *The Lord rebuke thee*, or restrain thy malice, and make void thy intention. 3. The Lords election of, and free love toward his people, is that whereby they are allowed to answer Satans retriations, which otherwise might

be heavy upon them; and where the Lord hath chosen and purposed to do good unto a people, he will also have a care of their Ministers for their sake. This we are taught from Christs first reason of intercession: *The Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee.* God having chosen them, Satans bill (how true soever) could not be heard to destroy them, or to reject *Joshua* their Minister. 4. Though the people of God, may be cast into painful and hard trouble, and may be kept in it till it come to some extremity that they may be purged, yet shall they certainly be rescued and brought out again: for so was it with *Joshua*, and this remnant, *a brand pluckt out of the fire*; a stick halfe burnt, and yet thought worth the pulling out. 5. As the former afflictions of the Lords people do so endear them to Christs heart, that he will not hear Satans accusations; so his eminent appearing for them in trouble, is a pledge that he will not destroy them, but perfect his work notwithstanding Satans machinations: for this is the force of the second reason of Christs intercession, *Is not this a brand pluckt out of the fire?* as if he said, should my anger smoke yet against my people who are already almost consumed by it, and whereof they yet bear the marks? should I not make an end of pleading with fraile flesh? and shall I prove so foolish a builder, as when I have appeared in bringing them out of consuming trouble, giving them a remnant to escape, I should again forsake them, and let all my paines be in vain.

Verf. 3. Now *Joshua* was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the Angel.

4. And he answered, and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to passe from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.

Christ having defended *Joshua* against Satans opposition, doth further represent to the Prophet, his taking away the ground of Satans accusation; there being many sins both of his own, and of the Priests and people for whom he interceded, wherewith they were polluted, as a man with filthy garments,

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ments, and whereof the badges were the base and low condition, both of Priests and people at that time; Christ doth take away the sin by pardon, and with it the tokens of anger, and adorne him with his righteousness and with holiness in the sight of God, signified by the taking away of filthy garments, and putting on new raiment, and this is done by these who stood before Christ, that is, by his own appointed means and instruments, or by the Ministry who are employed by Christ in this work, as Angels were his Attendants in this vision.

Doff. 1. As sin in it self doth pollute and make vile, so where the pollution thereof in it self and before God is not laid to heart, God is provoked to let it appear in visible evidences, making the sinner vile and contemptible; for, so is imported in that *Joshua was clothed with filthy garments.* 2. As the sense of sin ought not to drive away the sensible sinner from Christ, or from duty; so Christ will not cast them from his presence or care, till he help them against that which troubles them; for, *Joshua in all this stood before the Angel.* 3. As God requires, that his people for whom he appears, and especially instruments eminently employed, be holy and reconciled with him, that so Satans mouth may be stopped, the work may prosper in their hands, and God may bless them, and take away the tokens of his anger: so the only way for attaining this, is by a free pardon of sin, and the imputation of Christs righteousness, and by his vertue put forth for their sanctification: for, this closeth the plea, when *the filthy garments are taken from him,* and when Christ *chuseth his iniquity to passe from him,* and *clotheb him with change of raiment,* or new garments in place of the old. 4. As it is Christs office, and a peculiar fruit of his mercy, to pardon, justifie and sanctifie his people; so hath he sufficient meanes and wayes to apply this to his people, (especially by his Messengers, to whom he gives the Ministry of reconciliation,) and to take away the tokens of his anger for sin; for, while Christ *spake to these that stood before him,* to do this, it doth not import that Angels are employed about this work, though they take pleasure in the prospering of the Church, but that the Lord hath employed in this work a Ministry (represented by these Attendants,) who carry these glad tydings, and instrumentally do retain and loose sins, in whose mouth, speaking from the Word, we are to finde Christs minde to the sensible soul, and whose voice they are commanded to obey, *Isa. 59. 10.* and that sin being pardoned, Christ hath in-

struments enough to take away any bitter fruit of sin, even Angels themselves being willing to minister for their good, Heb. 1. 14. 5. Whoever be the instruments employed, yet Christ is the chief actor in the Churches reconciliation and happiness, who is to be eyed in what we enjoy, and who must speak the Word to the heart, before we can be fully comforted; this is imported not only in that *he spake to these that stood before him*: but in that himself saith the Word, and expounds, and confirms that action, *unto him be said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to passe from thee, &c.*

Verf. 5. *And I said, Let them set a faire mitre upon his head. So they set a faire mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments, and the Angel of the LORD stood by.*

Christ having promised remission of sin and sanctification, common to the Priests and people, here is further represented the restoring of the Priestly dignity, the balencesse whereof was a great discouragement to that people in their work: the Prophet in vision seeing what was done, interposes that what was wanting of the Priestly dignity might be supplied, which is granted, and a promise is made of fitting *Josua* with such graces and abilities as were suitable for his Priestly office, signified by the Priestly mitre and garments put upon him; Christ standing by to ratifie the act, and assist his servants. *Doct.* 1. Christ takes pleasure to have his gracious purposes carried on by the intercession and prayers of his people, who ought to stir up themselves to take hold of the opportunity of a time of love, to represent such things to Christ, as grieves and are a burden to them; for, the want of the former dignity of the Priesthood being an affliction of that time, and the Prophet seeing Christ at work to do good to that people, interposeth for this, *And I said, &c.* and gets a good answer: the prayer put in his heart, being as a pledge that Christ would do the thing. 2. At the true grace of God, and reconciliation with him is an excellent qualification for any vocation to which the Lord calls a man, especially for the holy Ministry; so these who are called to that charge, do stand in need of a peculiar dispensation

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on of the Spirit in abilities and graces requisite for their employment, which is also to be sought from Christ, not only by themselves, but by all the members of the Church; for, here *Joshua*, gets reconciliation, and the robes of righteousness first on, v 4. and then more is sought from Christ in reference to his office; *And I said, Let them set a faire mitre on his head.* 3. As Christ will have a peculiar care to keep up a Ministry in his Church, and to furnish them with the gifts of his Spirit; so Christ being reconciled with and about to do good unto a land, his Ministers may expect peculiar dispensations of his Spirit, and to be kindly dealt with for that end; for so are we taught by *setting of a faire mitre upon his head, and clothing him with garments*, albeit now these ornaments were all lost, yet the type sheweth, that when the Lord is taking away the sins of the people, the Priesthood and Ministry should not faile, and that in such a time it should be well with them. 4. Christ is the Church and his servants fast friend, who will not see their affaires neglected, nor his purposes of good concerning them frustrated, and doth undertake to assist and maintaine them in their duty, and up-holding them against all the opposition, that his employing them, and doing for them, may raise unto them; for while they are clothing *Joshua*; *The Angel of the Lord stood by*, as it were, to see it done, and avow his servant whoever opposed him.

Verf. 6. And the Angel of the LORD protested unto Joshua, saying,

7. Thus saith the LORD of hostes, If thou wilt walk in my wayes, and if thou wilt keep my charge, then thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by.

Unto this restoring of the Priestly dignity, there is subjoynted in the vision a solemn engagement unto *Joshua*, and in him to all the Priests, that if he would be faithful in his duty, he should be continued and protected in his office, and after death have a place in Heaven among these glorious Angels, who stood by Christ attending on him in this vision. *Dist. 1. Neither the*

duty nor the encouragements of a faithful Minister can be so seriously pondered, as they ought by these who are so employed, till Christ inculcage them again and again; therefore the Angel of the Lord protested unto *Joshua*, thus installed with new dignity in his office, or took these present in the vision, to witness concerning his duty and the reward of it. 2. These who are employed as Christs Ministers, had need to have much of his teaching that they may teach others, and must look to him for encouragement and reward of their work, whatever they get among men; therefore the Angel here both teacheth *Joshua* his duty, and tells him his reward. 3. Faithful Ministers are both to take heed to themselves and their flocks, and to joyne faithful walking as religious men with fidelity in their publick charge, that their conversation may commend the duties of their function, and their own experience may help them to be tender, zealous, faithful and lively in their publick trust; for, both are joynd here in *Joshuas* lesson; *If thou wilt walk in my wayes*, as all *Israel* are bound to do, and *if thou wilt keep my charge*, which belongs to the Priests office. 4. In all times and vicissitudes wherewith the Lords servants may be exercised, fidelity in their duty is their only way of safety, whatever probability or tentation lay to the contrary; for, unto *Joshua* so walking is the promise made. 5. It is no small reward and encouragement to the faithful servants of God, while they are within time, to have opportunity of a calling, wherein to do service to God, and to have any blessing from God upon their endeavours in it; for, this is the encouragement of *Joshua* unto fidelity, *Then thou shalt also judge my house*, that is, thy service shall be a reward to it self, thy continuing in it with my blessing and protection, shall richly recompence thee. 6. The Ministers of Gods house have not only the Ministry of holy things, as Word and Sacraments committed to their charge, but also the power of Ecclesiastical Government, to take order with scandalous offences within the familie; both these are here promised to *Joshua* and the Priests; *Thou shalt also judge my house, and shalt also keep my Courts*; and this promise of government is according to the law, *Deut. 17. 9, 12.* and warrantable practice, *1 Chro. 19. 11.* wherein no shadow of a type appears; for the government and kingly power of Christ was held forth in (at least) some of their Kings, and not in the Priestly office. 7. Whatever may seem to be wanting in the reward of Piety within

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within time, will be richly made up after death, to the godly man in heaven, therefore is that other encouragement added: *And I will give thee places to walk, &c.* 8. Albeit the riches of the glory of Saints inheritance in heaven, cannot be conceived while we are here, yet it may refresh us, to consider that in place of our bondage and restraint one way and other, we shall then obtain glorious liberty and freedom, signified here by *places to walk, or galleries*, (alluding to these that were about the Temple) wherein to expatiate at freedom: that whereas here we may be in low esteem, are vile and base in our selves, and oft-times vexed with ill company, we shall there be far otherwise, and have places amongst these that stand by, that is, Angels whom we shall be like and converse with them; and that in place of much distance and many desertions, we shall then enjoy and attend upon Christ for ever, signified by a place amongst these that stand by, which points at the Angels happiness, wherein *Josbua* was to participate, that they stood constantly by, as pages attending on Christ, wherever he appeared.

Verf. 8. *Hear now, O Josbua the High Priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee for they are men wondered at: for behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH,*

In the second part of the chapter, *Josbua* is led up to see the Author and Purchaser of all these benefits promised to him, and what is the substance and thing signified by his office, and the Temple which he was building, and to encourage him and stir up all to build the Temple, and to make much of the Priesthood he leads them to Christ the true Temple, in whom incarnate, dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily, who is the builder of his Church, and ground-stone of the building, and the true Priest who by his sacrifice sanctifies all believers.

In this verse, *Josbua* and the inferiour Priests are called to give attention, as being wondered at for their bold enterprises, and as being also in their office and way of life, types of Christ: and a promise is made to them that Christ should come in the flesh, as a contemptible branch of *Jesse's* dry root, who in his estate of humiliation should perfect the truth of the Priesthood,

as his Fathers obedient servant. *Doff.* 1. Christ is the substance and kernel of all the Churches encouragements, the procurer of them, and in whom is supplied all that is found wanting in other meanes of comfort; he is the restorer of his Church, the absolver of his people, the substance of the Priesthood, and the Upholder of the Ministry and true worship: therefore is the promise concerning him subjoynd, to make up all the rest by. 2. There is need of special up-stirring and attention, for the taking up of Christ, and the comforts allowed in him, considering our carnal dispositions, and how little may be discerned in Christ by them, till we get new senses, and how the noise of discouragements and tentations may keep out the sound of comfort; *Hear now*, saith the Lord. 3. Christ is the substance of all the ceremonies of the law, and of higher and lower offices in the Temple, who compleatly answers and fulfils that wherof they were a shadow: in him alone is to be found in reality all that they prefigured: therefore *Josua the High Priest, and his fellows that sit before him*, are all called to *hear*, Christ being the substance of all their ministration, not only employed in the Churches eminent affaires as the High Priest was, but one who condescends to meanest employments about her, and the naile upon whom the meanest vessel hangs. 4. As the Lords servants must not consult with flesh and blood, but undertake services to which God calls them, though they should be admired as monsters in so doing; so it is the special encouragement of such, that they have Christ to look to, to whom they have relation in that work, and to whom the promise is made, and who will have the honour of doing that wherein they are instruments. Thus may we joyne a twofold interpretation of these words, *They are men wondered at*, to wit, admired in being chief in undertaking the work of the Temple: and that for their encouragement they were to look on themselves, as types of Christ, who indeed carried on the work of that Temple, and who would build his own Church, and therefore they behoved to continue and the work go on, not only because Christ had chief hand in it, but that the type might resemble the thing typified. 5. It is the Scripture-character of the true Messiah, that according to the flesh he is to spring out of obscure and contemptible beginnings, and to execute his offices, (especially his Priesthood,) and accomplish the work of Redemption in the forme of a servant, com-
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ing humbly to serve, and not to be served, and becoming obedient to his Father, till having finished his work, he ascend to glory, and then the branch will spring out and flourish beyond all probability, and fill the earth with fruit and glory: all which is the comfort of the Church, that she hath such a lowly Saviour, in whose abasement and obedient sufferings she is exalted and saved, and in whose sympathy, flowing from the experimental essaying of her case, she findes a shelter in trouble; for, here it is both a character of him, and a comfortable promise to the Church concerning him; *Behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH.*

Verf. 9. For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: upon one stone shall be seven eyes, behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the LORD of hostes, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.

In the next place, Christ is promised as he who is represented by the Temple, and who is the ground and corner-stone of his own Church, and the Rock on which she is built, bearing all the burden of the fabrick, (which is signified by some stone solemnly laid in the building, by the Priests, or in their sight,) concerning whom is promised, that Gods infinite providence shall be about him and his Church, himself endued with perfect wisdom to see to, and care for all his members, and that by the effects and raves of the glory of God shining in him, he shall draw all eyes to him, and keep them on him: as also that he shall be so polished and adorned by God, as shall be marvellous to the world, *Doff. 1.* Christ the Mediatour is not only a part of the spiritual building, making up one Christ mystical with all his members, and the eminent and most excellent part of it: but the very foundation of his Churches being, upon whom all the Church, and every particular member thereof is and must be built, and without whom they cannot subsist: for, he is the stone laid before Joshua. *2.* As Christ in his office of Mediation, is a meanes of the Fathers appointment, by him to derive happinesse to the Church, and establish her in it; so whoever despise and reject him, yet the Father will have him high

high and eminent in that building; for, *I have laid the stone before Joshua*, saith the Lord; See, *Matth. 21. 42. 3.* As Christ hath all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, employed for seeing to the condition, and finding out the way of happiness for his people, in every case and exigent; signified by *seven eyes* (which is a number of perfection) engraven on that *one stone*; and as the vigilant Providence of God is alwayes intent upon Christ as Mediatour, and for his sake upon the welfare of his Church and Kingdome, as being his chief delight, signified also by *seven eyes over that one stone*: so also is Christ as Mediatour, God-man, revealing the Father in himself, and as the support and upholder of his Church, so glorious and excellent as may draw all to admire him, and so fix their expectation on him, as the only choice and refuge of lost sinners, and will do so to all the elect: which is also signified by *seven* (or, *many*) *eyes fixed on that one stone*, admiring him, and having all their expectation from him. 4. The beauty, excellency and furniture of Christ the Mediatour, is divine and rare, and he is the ornament, glory and store-house of all the spiritual building, being as God the brightness of his Fathers glory, and the expresse image of his person, *Heb. 1. 3.* his Humanity also being adorned with the gifts of the Spirit without measure for his calling, and with all divine perfections in so far as the humane nature is capable, *John 1. 14.* withal his sufferings for his people, (as so many curious engravings) speak not a little his beauty to these who have interest therein. This is signified by the Lords *engraving the graving*, of this stone, polishing it as a precious jewel, and adorning it by his Art.

Two benefits are promised to flow from Christ the Priest to his people; the first whereof is, remission and purging away of sins by the sacrifice upon the crosse, once for all, which needs not to be repeated as the Jewish sacrifices were, *Heb. 9. 12. and 10. 12, 14.* This is promised to the whole elect and mystical body of Christ, figured by the Jewes and their promised land, beside what peculiar relation it may have to them and their land, that their sins, being taken away by Christ, should not hinder him to favour them, nor the land for their sake; but should be looked on in due time, not as polluted and spewing them out for sin, nor possessed and over-run by enemies.

Doct.

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Doff. 1. Remission and removall of sinne is the choice mercy of Christs people, and the rise of other mercies, *I will remove iniquity*, is the fruit of Christs coming to the world and of his glory as Mediator. 2. Sinne is pardoned and removed onely by the merit and vertue of Christs one sacrifice, only once offered and not to be repeated on what pretext soever; for, iniquity is removed *in one day*. 3. Christs own peculiar and given people of the Father, are they upon whom the priviledge of pardon and sanctification is conferred, and on whose behalfe Christ offered up himselfe to procure these benefits; for it is the iniquity of *that land* (a type of the elect Church,) that is removed.

Verf. 10. In that day, saith the LORD of hostes, shall ye call every man his neighbour under the vine, and under the fig-tree.

A second benefit flowing from the former, is the taking away of all trouble, and the fear of trouble, which sinne procures; and the giving of peace, represented by peoples walking abroad, and daring, in the open fields under shades, to invite and call one another to feasts and enjoyment of the fruits of peace; which promise is spiritually performed to all the elect when they are assured that God is at peace with them; and is sometimes outwardly performed to the Church, when it is for her good beside what *Israel* may expect when they shall turne to Christ.

Doff. 1. True and sound peace comes only from Christ, and from the sense of the pardon of sinne through his blood, which these who have fled to Christ, ought to take as their allowance to rest confidently upon, whatever danger there be, and feed upon as the choicest of dainties and feasts; for, when iniquity is removed, *In that day, saith the Lord of hostes, shall ye call every man his neighbour, under the vine and under the fig-tree.* 2. As outward peace and tranquillity in the visible Church and Nation where it is, is a great mercy if it be well improved; so it shall not be wanting when it is for her good: for this promise is put in her charter for that also, and left in the hand of her wise and tender guide, to dispense it as he sees may be for her profit, being *the Lord of hostes* to make it forth-coming for her, when he pleaseth. 3. As it is a token of a blessed and
through

through peace, when with outward and forreigne enemies, God removes intestine dissensions; and as amity among the inhabitants of a Nation, especially in the Church, is a blessing and favour in its own kinde; So true spiritual peace ought to be entertained and improved by mutual godly Society, and communication of conditions and experiences for common edification: This is signified unto us, in that peace whether inward or outward is described, by calling every man his neighbour, living in amity, and inviting to mutual feasts and banquets.

CHAP. III.

THIS Chapter contains a fifth vision directed chiefly to Zerubbabel (as the former was to Joshuab) wherein under the type of a golden candlestick and two Olive-trees represented to the Prophet, which he is stirred up to consider, v. 1, 2, 3. and which the Prophet sensible of his ignorance desires to understand, v. 4. 5. Zerubbabel is instructed concerning Gods way in carrying on and perfecting the work of the Temple, v. 6. and assured of the success of it notwithstanding all opposition, to the shaming of all their heartlesse discouragement, v. 7, 8, 9, 10. The scope of which vision being thus explained, the Prophet desires to understand the meaning of the two Olive-trees, and gets an answer, v. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Verf. 1. **A**Nd the Angel that talked with me, came againe and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep:

2. And said unto me, What seest thou? and I said, I have looked, and behold, a candlestick all of gold, with a bowle upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lampes, which were upon the top thereof.

3. And two olive-trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowle, and the other upon the left side thereof.

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A new vision is here ready; but the Prophet, wearied and astonished with former visions and promises, is not able seriously to mark and consider this, till he be roused up by Christ; and then he gives an account of his seeing a golden candlestick, with a bowle on the top of it, which by two golden pipes (as is added, *v. 2.*) doth receive oile from two Olive-trees, without any humane industry, whence it is communicate to seven lamps, by as many pipes, to keep them perpetually burning. In all which allusion is made to the candlestick in the Tabernacle and Temple, something being added to fit the vision to the present scope: *Doct. 1.* The consolations and encouragements of a people following God, are so far from being rash imaginations of mens brain who are employed in Commissions, that Christ hath more to communicate then they are able to comprehend; for this end is it marked, that the Prophet be-
 loved to be roused up by the Angel; and put upon the considering this vision, that he may carry it to the Church. *2.* As our weaknesse is such while we are envircined with mortality, that we cannot long bear up in spiritual duties; So great promises in hard times, and when there are small deservings, will rather overcharge our narrow hearts with astonishment, then be entertained and rested on by faith; for, here the Prophet is as *one asleep*, with wearinesse and astonishment. *3.* There is need of much upstirring from our natural lazinesse and ordinary indisposition, when we are employed in holy duties, if we would reap benefit by them, and see into the riches of advantage to be had in them; for, *the Angel waked me as out of a sleep*, saith the Prophet. *4.* Loving kindnesse in Christ, will both prevent his people with mercy, and come over all impediments, which they lay in the way of their own comfort; for, the Angels hath visions ready, when the Prophet dreamed not of them, and wakens him to see them, that he may communicate them to the Church. *5.* Albeit only the scope of this vision be explained in the Angels answer to the first question, and the Prophet in his second question doth only enquire concerning what was rare in the vision, the parts of the candlestick being already known to such as understood the meaning of those types in the Temple; yet we may, for our instruction, take up the summe of this vision as expounding the typicall candlestick in this, that nothing can be done in the Church without Gods preparing of instruments, for directing, edifying, and comforting of her, and
 with

without his giving the graces of his Spirit to every one, to carry on the work in his station. And so, 1. The Temple here represents the Church to be enlightened by Christ, she being in herself but dark and void of light and comfort till he come and appear in her, and for her, and make her light. 2. The Ministry appointed of Christ for the direction, edification; and comfort of the Church, are here (though elsewhere and in some respect it represent the Church it selfe, Rev. 1.20.) represented by the *candlestick*, who should be pure, that they may be precious in his sight as *gold*; and who ought to shine by purity and holiness of life, and be instrumental in making the Church a shining light in a dark world. 3. The *bowle upon the top of the candlestick*, which immediately receives the oil, doth fitly represent Christ as Mediator, the head and storehouse of his Church, to whom is intrusted all fulnesse of gifts and graces for the Churches behoof. 4. The variety and sufficiency of gifts communicate by Christ, for the good and salvation of the Church, is represented by *seven lamps*, all tending to one common end of burning and shining. 5. The way of deriving grace from Christ to his servants, by ordained and sanctified meanes, especially by his Covenant, our dependance, and the bands of communion betwixt him and his people, is represented by *seven pipes* going betwixt the bowle and the lamps. The rest of this shadow and type being afterward expounded by the Angel, we shall seek it there. Doct. 6. The Lords condescending to teach this Doctrine, as it were, twice to the Prophet, once in the type, and again in the explication; may teach us the certainty of the thing it selfe, our incapacity, and what need there is of studying it again and again.

Verf. 4. *So I answered and spake to the Angel that talked with me, saying, What are these, my Lord?*

5. *Then the Angel that talked with me, answered, and said unto me, Knowest thou not what these be? and I said, No, my Lord.*

The Prophet desiring to understand the meaning of this type, is prepared for an answer by the Angels drawing out a new and expresse

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expresse confession of his ignorance, to humble him. *Doth* 1. Gods calling of his people to enjoy manifestations of himselfe; calls upon them to desire to profit, and be instructed by them, as sensible of their own short coming; for, the Prophet answered, *saying, What are these?* as being called by this vision to seek more light and edification. 2. Even when God is acting and working before our eyes, we will remaine ignorant and not understand it, till he come and open our eyes; the mercy of discerning is a new mercy, after we have had the mercy it selfe; for the Prophet seeing all this, must put the question to the Angel, *What are these, my Lord?* 3. It is not unusual, nor obscure in Scripture-language, to give unto the signe the name of the thing signified or represented by it, without any change of the one into the other, but only because of typical or Sacramental representation; for, here the Prophet enquiring, *What are these?* doth not professe ignorance of these things in themselves, (for he expresseth the contrary unto the Angel, v. 2, 3.) but what they were in that state, or what they signified and represented. And so in the answer, v. 6. *This is the Word,* &c. The meaning is not that the candlestick was that promise, but that it signified the thing promised, and was a representation of it. 4. Christ requirer of these whom he will teach, that they be sensible of their own ignorance, and humble in the sense of it; and that not in a superficial way, but that it be deeply rooted, and their heart again and again convinced of it, that the mercy of Christs help may be the more esteemed; therefore albeit the first question imply the Prophets confession of his ignorance, yet Christ will not satisfie him, till he be more humbled with it, and till by a new question, *Knowest thou not?* he draw out a new confession, *No, my Lord.*

Vers. 6. Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the Word of the LORD unto Zerrubabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hostes.

The Prophet being thus prepared, gets an explication of the scope of the whole vision, in two particulars, in the first whereof of Zerrubabel, and with him all the people, are informed concerning Gods way of carrying on his own work, that they might

not faint, though outward probable meanes of armies and strength of men fail them, but rely on God, who is al sufficient by his own Spirit and intrinsecal power and vertue to set up his Church, to preserve and furnish it with all things needfull without these means, and who useth to lay these oft-times by, that his own immediate power may shine. Thus the explication answers well unto the type; for as the candlestick was constantly supplied with oil, that the lamps might burn, without humane industry, the Olive-trees pouring in oile of themselves, so should this work go on, without any meanes that might in probability carry on such a work. *Doff.* 1. It is a great blessing when the Lords people are instructed, and made wise concerning the way of his working, and carrying on a work in his Church, that they be not crushed under mistakes, as thinking that he is about to ruine, and desert it, when indeed he is taking the best way to perfect it; and here the Lords own teaching is requisite for understanding his deep counsels in so farre as may be for our good: therefore the Lord himselfe teacheth *Zerubbabel* in this point, that he stumble not. 2. As all that are employed about the work of God, and are cordially affected to it, will finde it lie near their heart: so especially these who have any place of power among Gods people, and in carrying on his work, ought to take such a burden of it, as may send them to seek encouragement from Heaven; for, *Zerubbabel* needs a particular word, *This is the Word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel.* 3. Albeit might and probable meanes do not alwayes stand in opposition to Gods power in his work; but may sometimes be subordinate, as principal workers, and instruments by which he works: yet, 1. Might and power are not to be doated on, nor leaned on when they are given to the Church, but Gods own power should be immediately eyed, which must stirre up, enable, and blesse these meanes before they can do any thing, and who will take meanes away when they are trusted to, and be forgotten. So long as God stands obliged by his power to do for his people and work, they are not to be anxious though all probable meanes faile them; seeing he, who only makes meanes active and effectually, can fulfill his own counsell without them, being still the Lord of Iussus, when visible armies fail. 3. It is the Lords way in carrying on his work, to lay by much of humane power and probable meanes, that he may enoll his own power and command his love to his people and work, when

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much of him, and little of the creature, is seen about them. All this is imported in this information, *Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit*, or, power and vertue, saith the Lord of hostes. His power is only to be trusted in, and to be trusted in what ever else appear, and it will be eminently seen, and other help be obscured and laid by in Temple-building.

Verf. 7. *Who art thou, O great mountaine, before Zerubbabel? thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.*

The second particular in the explication of this vision, is to assure Zerubbabel concerning the successe of his building the Temple, (as a type of Christ the builder of the Church by his own power,) that as the candlestick, furnished by the Olive-trees, did continually shine and hold out light, so the Lords power should carry on this work, not only without, but also against all humane power and opposition; which should be so far from hindring the work, that it should help to pave a way to it; and the same power should bring this work in Zerubbabels hand to a perfection, to the commendation of the grace of God, and joy of all, testified by their acclamations when the work is perfected, and by their prayer that God would continue to blisse it. Doct. 1. Christs work in his Church, whether externally reforming and setting up an house, or internally converting, may have opposition in the way, which will seem as insuperable; as to carry a great traine, or make weak persons climb over high and steep hills; and such a work will not go on without exercise and teares; for, here is a *great mountaine* in the way, whereby in relation to Zerubbabel, was signified the Monarchy of *terisa*, in so farre as it obstructed the work, and the Samaritan faction about them; and in relation to Christ and his Church, it signifieth all the opposition that devils and men (especially great ones) in the world, can raise to hinder that work. 2. Whatever great opposites may seem to be in their own eyes, or in the thoughts of the fainting people of God, yet in Gods eyes they are nothing and contemptible, and his Spirit is provoked at their presumption in undertaking such an enterprise, and that they should offer to crosse his beloved work and people;

people; for, *Who art thou, O great mountaine?* imports his contemning of them, his indignation against them, and that he will make them know themselves better then to adventure on such a work. 3. Not only will opposition not prove so hurtfull as it appears terrible, and be easie when the Lords people comes to it, and not hinder the work; but the over-ruling hand of God will make opposition a meanes of furthering and carrying on the work, which it was appointed and intended to hinder, to the praise of the glory of his own wisdom and power, who is above enemies in that wherein they deal proudly, for, the great mountaine shall become a plaine, not only not a mountaine and easie to walk over, but shall pave a way, and fill up valleys, and hollow places, that the work may go on. This was accomplished in the type to Zerubbabel and the Jewes, when *Darius* by his Decree promoted the work, and compelled their enemies about them, and made them furnish what might advance the work, *Ezra* 6. and is daily brought to passe by Christ in making all the plots of devils and men, and all their debates, contribute to clear up truth, and promote the work of conversion and salvation of his own people. 4. As instruments, how weak soever their honest and single minding of Gods work, and not driving their own interest alongit with it, is the way to make it prosper, and to make opposition ineffectual; (for, such a one in the type was Zerubbabel, before whom *the mountaine becomes a plaine*;) So Christ being party to all opposition against the Church, is ground of hope to her, that it shall not prevaile, but be made subservient to her good; for, it is he in the substance, of whom it is said, *before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plaine*. 5. As it is the Lords great mercy (yea, and his way, where a people cleave to him) that he brings a begun external work of Reformation to a perfection such as is attainable, in despite of all opposition, however it be oft interrupted, and go but slowly on, and by degrees, (for, so was it here in the type, *He shall bring forth the head-stone thereof*, alluding to some custome, wherein as the foundation-stone, so also the capstone was laid in the Magistrates sight, or by himselfe;) So, it is Christs prerogative and way, to perfect his begun good work, and to carry on his mystical body, and every member thereof, by degrees unto perfection; for, the substance of this promise is perfected in him, and his work about his people, *He shall bring forth the head-stone thereof*. 6. As there is matter of joy in the

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the going on of Christs work; so hath he reserved much joy for his people in the perfecting of it; for, as some shouted for joy at the laying of the foundation. Ezra 3. 11. so more is abiding; *He shall bring out the Head-stone with shouting*; as a shadow of the joy of the Lords people, when a long desired and much interrupted work of Reformation comes to some periods; but especially of the *Hallelujahs* and joy that shall be when Christ presents his Spouse perfect and compleat before the Father. 7. The Lords work among his people is so carried on, as not only free grace begins it, but the further it goes on, grace is the more to be magnified, and most of all seen at the very close of it: yea, any perfection it attains to within time, must be upheld by the same grace that gave it; for, so it was in the type here; this shouting; *Grace, grace unto it*, is both an acclamation and acknowledgement of the much and multiplied favour of God that had shined in that work, till its perfection; and also a prayer that God would let out his grace, and bless that Temple in the use for which it was built. 8. Christs work in and about his people, is so full of tender savours and loving kindnesse, as may bring unto him the glory of abundant grace from all impartial Judges; and will one day proclaim it before all the world; for, this acclamation and applauding of the work made so beautiful and compleat by grace, making every one commend and wish well to it, is nothing else but a commending him and his grace who made it such, and leads his people to expect that day wherein he shall be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all the believers, 2 Thel. 1. 10.

Vers. 8. *Moreover, the Word of the LORD came unto me, saying,*

9. *The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house: his hands shall also finish it, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you.*

The successe of building the Temple is confirmed by a new message, that their hearts may rest on it, and by seeing the accomplishment, may be assured of Christs being sent of the Father, to promise this, and see it performed. Deff. 1. The

Promises of the Word are faithful and worthy of our trust and confidence, as being the Word of him, who by his Word gives being to all things: this repetition of the promise, and that as the Word of Jehovah, shewes, not only how ready we are to distrust, but how serious he is in promising, and will not eat in, but make good what he saith, so that his Church may least to it. 1. It is a peculiar proof of Gods favour to a land, when the Lord not only grants a Reformation, and the building of an habitation of pure doctrine and ordinances for his own Name amongst them, but when he perfecteth it speedily, and in the age wherein it begins, and is not provoked by their sins, to leave the generation whom he brings out of bondage, to perish in a wilderness, before they come to such a promised land: therefore it is a special promise to the Jews in the type, not only that the Temple should be perfected, but that the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also finish it. 3. However Christs works and counsels in the world may seem to lie long interrupted, yet where he begins he is unchangeable, and endures to all generations to see it perfected; for, this promise is also true of him in the substance: The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also finish it. 4. The Lords dispensations toward his reconciled people, are then rightly studied, when the fruits of Christs being employed as Mediator about them appears, and his fidelity, love and care of his people are seen to shine in them: and they are still to be studied, over and over again till this be seen, that so Christs love may be shed abroad in their hearts, and he become high and precious in their estimation, for, the event of this successe is, *And thou shalt know that the Lord of hostes hath sent me unto you*, where the speech is directed unto the Prophet, for the good and information of the whole people: *Unto you*, saith he, in the plural number, albeit the Prophet be spoken to, that he might teach them: *Thou shalt know, &c.* 5. Albeit Christ in his office of mediation be inferiour to the Father, and sent and employed by him, yet that diminisheth nothing of the glory of his Godhead, but he is Jehovah, equal with the Father for all that: for, here the Angel who speaks unto the Prophet is Jehovah, v. 8. and yet he saith, *The Lord of hostes hath sent me.*

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Verf. 10. *For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoyce, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with these seven: they are the eyes of the LORD which run to and fro through the whole earth.*

The Lord subjoynes the reason of this so frequently reported promise, and the use of the doctrine, which is to reprove the corrupt judgment of that people, who judged of that work by the small beginnings thereof; and their discouragement flowing from it, as fearing all they did would be in vain, that it should not be like the first Temple, and so their enemies should mock them, as well as the ancient men wept, *Ezra 3*. This the Lord reproves and promises they should yet rejoyce in seeing Zerubbabel, (a type of Christ) as chief director, making to work, and by considering that Gods constant providence, which is in-
 1. It is the Lords way in his work, whether with the Church or particular souls, to begin at small things, promising very little, that he may set forth the glory of his power, in bringing out a work out of them, which men could never have expected: for, there is *a day of small things*, which ends in a glorious Temple. 2. Judging of Gods work, by outward appearances, or the first view, and undervaluing of it, when it satisfies not our mould: or seems not to promise much, and being discouraged thereby, is a sin which the Lords people should be ashamed to own or avow, considering how much God will bring out of small things, and that cherishing of them is the way to make them great; for, *Who hath despised the day of small things?* saith he, intimating that none ought to take with it; and this sin of *despising* doth not break forth only in open contempt and mockery, but may shelter it self under the pretence of being sorry, that things are so little, (as these do, *Ezra 3. 12.*) may expresse it self in heartlesse lying by from duty, as the Jewes did here, and men may also pretend that they would not despise small things, but that they are grieved because they can

see nothing: for, so did their discouragement account of these small things, *Hag. 2. 3.* 3. Christ's graciousnesse and tender-nesse toward his people, is oft-times such, as to refute their greatest discouragements and mistakes with mercy, and silence their groundlesse complaints with giving them matter of joy, and causing them to rejoyce because of it; for, *despisers shall rejoyce*, saith he. 4. Gods begun work in his people and Church, how contemptible soever it appear, will end in joy to his people, the hope whereof should silence present discouragements; for, *Who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoyce.* 5. So long as Christ hath his hand at his own work, and hath not given it over, although it be not perfected, yet it affords matter of joy, considering that it saith, he hath not yet abhorred his work, and will perfect it: for, in the type this was one ground of joy, *They shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel*, to wit, as chief director of the work, going about it, and seeing that all be right built; which agrees most complearily to Christ in the substance, who is himself the Master-builder. 6. Not only is it to be reckoned, that where Christ hath begun a work, he is still about it till it be perfected; but in special he may be reckoned working, when he is fitting his people to be stones in his building, and (if it were even by trials) cutting off superfluities of naughtinesse from his work and people, which might deform his building, albeit in the meantime the work do not appar visibly to advance; this may be signified by the plummet-line, the signe of his being at work, which is the instrument whereby builders try and square their building, and cut off all excrescences in it, and is as needful as to lay on more stones upon it to raise it higher. Christ may be very busie at work when we are ill pleased with it, and when our sense is not satisfied that it is for and working under ground, by discoveries, purging, humility, trials, &c. is as needful as that we long most after. 7. A right sight of the vigilant providence of God, which is employed to have a care of Christ and his Church, and governes and orders all things in the world, so as may best contribute for the good and welfare of the Church, may afford matter of joy in the midst of many discouragements, as declaring that his people are much in his heart, when his providence in all the world is with an eye to their good, and allowing us to cast all our cares and feares on him, who hath all power in his hands; for this is another ground of

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by, they shall see these seven; or, the perfect eye of providence on that chief stone, and all the building, which also are the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth.

Vers. 11. Then answered I, and said unto him, What are these two Olive-trees upon the right side of the Candlestick, and upon the left side thereof?

12. And I answered again, and said unto him, What be these two Olive-branches, which through the two golden pipes empty the golden oile out of themselves?

13. And he answered me, and said, Knowest thou not what these be? and I said, No, my Lord.

14. Then he said, These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.

The scope of the vision being thus explained, and the Prophet understanding that of the Candlestick, which was ordinary in the vision, doth only desire to be informed concerning the two Olive-trees furnishing the Candlestick, v. 11. and particularly concerning two branches which did furnish the Candlestick by two golden pipes, with bright oile, (which therefore is called gold) v. 12. Unto which question (the Prophet being again prepared and humbled with a new sense of his ignorance, v. 13.) answer is returned, v. 14. For understanding wherof, Consider, 1. That by the two Olive-trees, it is not clear to understand only the graces of God poured out on his Church, for that is indeed signified by the oile, according to the Scripture, Psalm 45. 7. but here the resolution is concerning the trees that furnished the oile; Nor yet are we in general to understand them of a fountain of bounty in God, for there can be no reason given why that should be compared to two trees, and be said to stand before the Lord. But by them we are to understand Christ anointed in his Priestly, (which includes his

Prophetical) and Kingly office, who was chief in this work, and in furnishing all instruments, who furnishes his Church, and serves his Father in the work of Redemption, and is cared for by him, as will be expressly cleared to us, *chap. 6, 12, 13.* Consider, 1. That the Angel answering both his questions in one, leads us to understand the one by the other, in so far as is needful; and therefore we may conceive, that either that of the branches is not touched as needlesse, or pointing out only the fit wayes of communicating himself to his peoples capacity, the pipes not being able to receive the oile of the whole tree at once, or that branches only now furnishing, imported Christs communicating himself in a small measure, in this typical work of building the Temple in respect of what he had, and was to communicate in the building of his Church under the Gospel, or if we will stretch it further, it may take in *Josua* and *Zerubbabel*, the one anointed Priest, the other a successor of their anointed Kings, who however as instruments in the work, they were resembled by the burning lamps, getting furniture from the bowle; yet in respect of their office among that people, and their influence upon all instruments of building the Temple, they were types of Christ, and so might be represented by two little branches, resembling him the great Olive-tree; and this interpretation seems to have ground, *Rev. 11. 4.* where as the two witnesses are resembled to *Moses* and *Aaron*, *Elijah* and *Elisha*, in regard of the effects of their Ministry, *ch. 5, 6.* So also to *Josua* and *Zerubbabel* in their time, under the type of two Olive, and two golden Candlesticks, also (perhaps called two in respect of the double rank of lamps on it) standing before the God of the carb, as being instrumental to keep in life in the Church, when all power that be opposeth to her; However leaving what further may be said of Christ and his offices, till we come to *chap. 6.* We may here learn, 1. When Christ is doing much for his people, he may yet let somewhat be wanting, to the end he may stir us up to prayer, employing him, whereby to draw prepared mercies out of his hand, that so we may not only have the mercie, but be confirmed and comforted in the acceptance of our persons and services, by his granting our desires; for, this vision is so explained in the former answer, as leaves room for new information upon new prayer and enquiry. 2. Christ doth not allow that his people should rest upon the habits or seed of graces within them, nor upon old sensible ex-

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periences, but where he is about to manifest himself, he keeps grace in exercise, and puts his people to frequent askings of it; for, albeit the Prophet had been but lately humbled in the sense of his ignorance, v. 3, yet here he is put to it afresh again, v. 13. 3. Christs humbling of his people when they seek to him, and his giving such answers at first, as may contribute to that end, gives them no ground to think, that either he doth reject, or will deny their suits, but rather assures them, that he is making way for a satisfactory answer; for, Christs humbling of the Prophet, hinders him not from satisfaction in his demand. 4. Christ sustaines very many relations to his people, and is very much to be seen in her furniture and well-being; for, many things in this type point at him; he is *the Olive-tree*, having, as God, and in his mediatory office all fulnesse, and being both active and willing of himself, to communicate it according to their capacity. He also may be pointed at in his two offices by *the two golden pipes*, conveying the oile from the trees to the Candlestick, it being through his merit as Priest, and his efficacy as King, that the fulnesse in him becomes ours, and that gives us allowance to depend on him for it: and further, as he hath all fulnesse, and hath found a way to make it ours, so is he *the bowl* to keep it, and to guide us and it, and he forth-coming for our good with it. In a word, Christ is to be seen all in all to his people. 5. The work of the Churches Redemption and salvation by Christ, is a work well-pleasing to God, however he be the party offended, and in doing whereof Christ doth acceptable service to his Father, and is maintained and cared for by him; for, the *two anointed ones*, (or Christ in his offices, represented by these trees, or, *sons of oile*) stand by the Lord, as doing him service in his office, and upheld by him, and so God in Christ reconciles the world, and is at peace with his people. 6. As God is blessed over all, and all-sufficient in himself, so he hath given, daily gives, and will give proof hereof in carrying on the salvation of his Church through Christ, making his power and dominion in all the earth contribute thereunto: therefore in this work is he named *the Lord of the whole earth*. 7. As any measure of furniture is given to any member of the Church, that it may be made use of for the good of the whole; so all such as desire to be useful in their stations, ought to be much in dependance on God, and to study

to stand in his favour, and be under his care: for so much doth this answer, as it may concerne *Josbua* and *Zerubbabel* the types, teach us. Any oile they have is to be poured out for the good of the whole, and they are to stand by the Lord.

CHAP. V.

THis chapter containes a sixth and seventh vision, holding forth doctrine different from the former: wherein is declared, that sin continued in, would bring on private calamities, and having filled up the measure thereof, would also draw down publick judgements upon the whole Nation: and so in the first vision, under the type of a large flying roll, v. 1, 2. is represented the curse of God, ready to be executed upon transgressors of the first and second table, v. 3, and to cut off their house and familie, v. 4. In the second vision, under the type of an Ephah or measure, v. 5, 6. and of a woman, representing wickednesse, cast and cloied therein with a talent of lead, v. 7, 8. and all carried away together to the land of *Sbinar*, v. 9, 10, 11. is represented, that when the Land should fill up the measure of their iniquity, they should be carrie into captivity as formerly they had been.

Verse 1.

Then I turned, and lift up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, a flying roll.

2. And hee said unto me, What seest thou? and I answered, I see a flying roll, the length thereof is twenty cubits, and the breadth thereof ten cubits.

The Lord having hitherto comforted this people with sweet visions and promises of the prospering and blessing of the work, doth now season these with hard threatenings for their sin: shewing, that their own sins not only hindered the work, but (notwithstanding any great things he had done, or was to do for them) would draw plagues on particular sinners, and if they persevered, would utterly subvert and overturn the Nation;

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tion, all which their former experience might not a little help them to lay to heart. The type of the first vision (containing threatenings of publike calamities for sin) represented unto the Prophet, is a flying roll, or large parchment written upon, according to the custome of writing books in these times; and containing the threatned curses of the law against private sinners, now going forth in execution. *Doff.* 1. As sin is sufficient to obstruct the performance of glorious promises, where there is no other enemy; so Gods kindnesse to a people will not hinder, but that he should reckon with them for their sins: therefore are these visions subjoynd to the former, to shew them what was the cause of their low condition, and of the Temples coming ill speed, and to warne them what they might yet expect, notwithstanding former promises. 2. Even these who are most intent about spiritual things, have need to stir up themselves, and to be stirred up of God, to be yet more diligent and exact; for, the Prophet seeing the roll, is stirred up to consider it better by a new question, *What seest thou?* 3. The right way of understanding and taking up calamities for our use, is to look upon them through the prospect of the Word, which will discover the author and the procuring cause of trouble, and the use we should make of them: therefore are the calamities to be inflicted compared to a roll, with relation to the book of the law threatening them, which we should consider when we feel the stroke. 4. The judgements denounced against sinners and sin by the Word of God, will not still lie by as if they were asleep, but will break forth in execution, and will speedily overtake and bring down the rebel; therefore this judgement is not now lying within the Temple, but gone forth and visible; *yes, a flying roll*, swiftly to take the prey. 5. As the threatenings denounced in the Word are sad when they are executed, so the execution will be exactly answerable to the threatening, whatever sinners may dream to the contrary: for, the dimensions of this roll, being in length twenty cubits, and in breadth ten cubits, doth not only shew that it was a large roll, containing many curses, (being written on both sides, v. 3.) to meet with all sins, and make the sinner complaiably miserable, but particularly it may be conceived to have relation to the houses into which it should enter, which being ordinarily twice as long as broad, imports that the curse should fill the house, or, to the porch of the Temple, from whence the roll came, and where the

Law was taught, which being of the same size with this roll, *1 Kings 6. 3.* doth import that the execution should be exactly as large as the threatening pronounced, and answerable thereunto.

Verf. 3 Then said he unto me, *This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth; for every one that stealeth, shall be cut off as on this side, according to it, and every one that sweareth shall be cut off as on that side, according to it.*

This type is expounded to signifie the Lords curse, going forth to do execution in all the land of Judah, and to cut off sinners against the first and second table of the Law, and that according to the contents of the roll, which was written on both sides, with relation to the two tables of the Law.

Doff. 1. Whatever be the particular punishment inflicted by God for sin, yet this is seriously to be laid to heart, that every such punishment hath in its bosome a curse, till the sinner awaked thereby, flee to Christ, who became a curse, that his own may inheric a blessing; for, *This is the curse that goeth forth,* saith he.

2. The Lord is an impartial avenger of sin, when it is persevered in without repentance; and when other meanes are ineffectual, he will not spare to cut off the desperate sinners; for, the curse goes over the face of the whole earth, or, land, and every one shall be cut off, without exception, who are guilty.

3. The Lord will not spare, but indifferently punish sin, whether against the first or second table, in avoiding of both which the Lords people are to testifie their sincerity; this is signified by cutting off of every one that stealeth, and every one that sweareth; all sins against both Tables being comprehended under these two, which were frequent in these times, and in themselves grosse, and the roll having curses on this side, and this side, according to which both sorts of sinners were to be cut off.

4. When a people are delivered out of sore troubles, and yet their lusts are not mortified, they ordinarily prove covetous, false, and oppressing, as labouring by all meanes to make up these things that trouble hath stript them of; therefore is there a particular threatening against every one that stealeth, it being a false sin

CHAP. 9. *Prophecie of ZECHARIAH.* 95

fin at their return from the captivity, for they went *every man to his own house*, Haggai 1. 9. were cruel oppressors, *Nehemi. 5. 4, 2, 3. &c.* yea, and robbed God of tythes and offerings, *Mal. 3. 8. 5.* Covetous and false men, in their bargains with men, will make no bones of impiety and perjury, if that may help to gain their point; for with the former is joyned, *every one that sweareth*, which is expounded, *v. 4. to be swearing falsely by Gods Name.*

Verſ. 4. I will bring it forth, ſaith the LORD of hoſts, and it ſhall enter into the houſe of the chiefe, and into the houſe of him that ſweareth falſely by my Name: and it ſhall remaine in the miſt of his houſe, and ſhall conſume it with the timber thereof, and the ſtones thereof.

The puniſhment of theſe ſins is more particularly declared, that the curſe ſhall not only cut off the ſinner himſelf, but ſhall purſue his houſe and familie, and like a moth conſume it, till it fall about his eares, and ruine him and his *Deſt. 1.* God is the executor of his own threatened judgements, and will make them effectual, oppoſe him who will; *I will bring it forth, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.* 2. Vengeance will purſue the ſinner, even in that condition wherein he thinks himſelf moſt ſecure, nor ſhall he be able to reſiſt or remove it, till it perform the work for which it is ſent; for it ſhall enter, *even into the houſe*, where he thinks to live ſecurely, and it ſhall remain in the miſt of the houſe. 3. Sinners do oft-times not only draw down judgements upon themſelves, but do alſo provoke God to ruine their houſes and families thereby, that they may be monuments of his ſeverity, and warnings to all others; for, *it ſhall abide in the miſt of the houſe, and ſhall conſume it with the timber thereof, and the ſtones thereof.* 4. The Lord needs not make uſe of violent remedies to take order with impenitent ſinners, and their families, but can by his curſe, and removal of his bleſſing from what they have, make it ſenſibly melt away, ſo that they ſhall be ruined, and themſelves cannot well tell how; for ſo much is imported in the expreſſion, the curſe ſhall conſume the houſe with the timber and ſtones, or be as a moth in it, ſo waſte it away.

Verſ.

Verf. 5. Then the Angell that talked with me went forth and said unto me, Lift up now thine eyes and see what is this that goeth forth.

6. And I said, What is it? and he said, This is an Ephah that goeth forth. He said moreover, This is their resemblance thorow all the earth.

Not to trouble the Reader with diversity of apprehensions, concerning the scope of this vision, whereof so little is interpreted, and that so darkly by the Angel; That which appears to come nearest truth is, that as in the former vision was shewed, how the Lord would pursue the sin of particular persons with private calamities; so in this is declared that he would also punish the whole Nation, and cast them out of their land, when the measure of their iniquity should be filled up. And this the Lord in this vision not only warns them of, by shewing what had formerly come upon them, but denounces and foretels for the time to come. To this all the parts of the vision agree; whereof the first is an Ephah coming forth in view, which was one of the dry measures among the Jewes, and is generally taken for any measure. This the Angel interprets to be *their resemblance*, or, *eye in all the earth*, or, *in all the land*, to wit, of Judea; that is, that measure, which by little and little is filled up to the brim, represents or resembles the measure of their sins, which God in his long-suffering and patience bears with, till by every one in the land, their putting in a part, and adding sin to sin, all of them make up an heap to fill the measure, and ripen them for judgement; in all which the Providence and eye of God is upon them to observe and measure up their sins, as by an Ephah till it be full. *Doff.*

1. When the Lord pursues sin with many particular calamities, and neither the corrected nor others are bettered thereby, it is a presage that the land is ripening for a national stroke; so much doth the connexion of this vision with the former teach.
2. Such is the Lords long suffering and patience, that he doth not proceed upon every provocation to plague his people, till sin be come to an height and past remedy, and till that measure be filled up, which he in his long-suffering and providence prescribes;

CHAP. 1. Prophecie of ZECCHARIAH. 97

cribes; for, here is an Ephah to be filled up, ere it be carried away! 3. When a land is ripening for judgement, and declining from God, the sins of every particular rank & person in it, adds to the provocation, and contributes to encrease the flame, and hasten the judgement: for, *the Ephah is their resemblance in all the land*. Every one in the land contributes to fill it up, and however the sins of every one apart may seem little, yet being put together in the measure, they will amount to much. 4. Albeit God be not alwayes smiting for sin, yet he is not asleep, but carefully observing how men fill up the measure, who they are that contribute most to that effect; that they may drink the deeper of the cup of judgement, and observing when it is full, that he may arise and punish: for, thus the words will also read; *This is their eye in all the land*, or the Ephah represents Gods Providence upon them, observing and measuring the sins of every one, and of all in common.

Ver. 7. *And behold, there was lift up a talent of lead: and this is a woman that sitteth in the midst of the Ephah.*

8. *And he said This is wickedness, and he cast it into the midst of the Ephah, and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.*

The second part of the vision is a woman in the Ephah, representing that sinful and wicked people and Nation, having now filled up the measure of their sin: and a talent of lead, pressing her down in the Ephah, signifying a concluding of them under sin without pardon, and a keeping them under their guilt, till they be punished. Doct. 1. Sin persevered in by a land, will at last fill up the measure; and Gods patience toward them will come to a period: for, *the woman* representing wickedness, grows up and fills the Ephah, wherein she sits. 2. When the Lord contends with a land by judgements, it is not so much because of ordinary escapes and infirmities, as for grosse iniquity come to an height; for, *this is wickedness*, saith he, or representation of that people, now become extremely wicked, which is the cause of the threatened captivity. 3. When the Lord hath long contended by his Word, and particular affli-

ations, with the sin of his people, and they yet persevere, it is righteous with him to give them up to their own hearts, and leave them as captives under the power of impenitency and guilt, till he, without any altering of his sentence plague them: for, *Wickednesse is cast into the midst of the Ephah, and the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof*: that is, they are left under the power of their sin, till vengeance be executed.

Vers. 9. Then lift I up mine eye, and looked, and behold, there came out two women, and the winde was in their wings (for they had wings like the wings of a stork) and they lift up the Ephah between the earth and the heaven.

10. Then said I to the Angel that talked with me, Whither doe these beare the Ephah?

11. And he said unto me, To build it an house in the land of Shinar, and it shall be established and set there upon her owne base.

The last part of the vision, is of two women carrying away the Ephah, and the woman therein to the land of *Shinar*, to abide and dwell there. Whereby is signified, that when their cup was full, they should speedily be carried into captivity out of their own land, where they should long abide, as in a dwelling place. They are said to be carried captives into the land of *Shinar*, or, *Babylon*, Gen. 11. 2, 3, &c. partly to expresse their future captivity by the Romanes, in such a way, as might be most sensible to them who had been captives in *Babel* before; and partly, because in their second captivity many of them were scattered in these parts, because of the many Jewes who abode still there. As for the other circumstance of the vision concerning the two women who had the winde in their wings, or were helped to flee by the winde, it were curiosity to determine of them further, then as pointing out the vanity of that peoples ways, which should drive them out of their land: or rather the Instruments of their captivity, who are resembled to women, only to agree with the rest of the vision, wherein the sinful Nation is resembled to a woman, and to two women, as being a

CHAP. 9. Prophecie of ZACHARIAH. 98

competent number for his work, as the disciples went out by
 pairs. *Doct.* 1. A people abusing afflictions, and marvellous
 deliverances from it, by their sinning yet more, may expect their
 afflictions will be returned upon them in harder measure: for,
 a new and sorer captivity, and longer dwelling under it is here
 threatened upon their renewed provocations. 2. The Lord hath
 sufficiency of instruments at his command, to execute his de-
 termined judgements, who being employed by him against his
 sinful people, shall finde all things concurring with them to
 carry on that work: this is signified by *two women*, enough to
 carry the Ephah, and by *their wings like the wings of a stork*,
 enabling them to flee, and do the work violently and swiftly;
 and to flee high *betwixt the heaven and the earth*, above the
 reach of any opposition made unto them by men; and *by the
 winde in their wings*, providence, as it were, concurring to help
 them forward. 3. Captivity and exile among prophane Na-
 tions, and from enjoying the face of God, or the society one of
 another in his Ordinances, is one of the Lords sore judgements
 whereby he plagueth the sins of his own Church; for, *Wicked-
 nesse is carried to the land of Shinar*. 4. As the Church is no
 place wherein reigning sin will get a biding habitation: so a
 people that are enemies to the Church, are accounted in Gods
 sight, as the common sink of all wickednesse, whom therefore
 he will certainly punish: this is signified by the carrying of
wickednesse out of the holy land, *to the land of Shinar*, as its
 own place, where all wickednesse dwelt: from which also the
 Jewes might assuredly gather, that as he had punished them, so
 he would not spare their enemies.

CHAP. VI.

IN the first part of the Chapter we have the eighth vision, wherein, under the type of four charets with horses of several colours, v. 1, 2, 3, is represented Gods effectual providence, in guiding the world by six instruments, for variety of dispensations, v. 4, 5, 6, 7. whereof in part an account is given to the Prophet, v. 8. In the second part of the Chapter, under the type of two Crowns made of some silver and gold offered by strangers, and set upon the head of *Josias*, v. 9, 10, 11. is represented Christ to be incarnate, the builder of his Church, and the King and Priest thereof, v. 12, 13. under whom strangers should come and joyne with the Jewes in building the spiritual Church, v. 14, 15. which Doctrine is closed with assuring this people that experience should prove the truth of his authority in Propheying, and with a declaration that obedience was the only way for them to finde the comfortable fruit of these promises, v. 16.

Vers. 1. **A**ND I turned and lift up mine eyes, and looked, and behold, there came four charets out from between two mountaines, and the mountaines were mountaines of brasse.

2. In the first charet were red horses, and in the second charet black horses;

3. And in the third charet white horses, and in the fourth charet grizled, and bay horses.

4. Then I answered, and said unto the Angel that talked with me, What are these, my LORD?

5. And the Angel answered, and said unto me, These are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth.

In

CHAP. 6. Prophecie of ZECCHARIAH. 191

In the vision there are four warlike charets, which are expounded, at the Prophets desire, to signifie the four spirits, or, *winder of the heavens*; whereby we may understand, either bands of Angels, (who are spirits, and as *winders*, *Psal. 104. 4.* and are represented by *charets*, *Pf. 68. 17.*) employed at Gods direction to all the quarters of the world, and therefore called *four*; or, generally, all instruments acted by the Spirit or motion of God, to do his will every where. The variety of colours of the charet-horses, signifieth variety of dispensations, whether joyfull, sad, or mixed, which are in Gods hands; the *red* portending calamities of warre and bloodshed, the *black*, calamitie or destruction coming any other way then by the sword, and the *white*, peace and prosperity, and the *grizzled*, and *bay*, a mixed dispensation of mercy and justice, though the *bay* may be rendered *strong*, as a common property of all the charet-horses. These charets come forth from between two mountaines of brasse, signifying the unchangeable decrees of God, which these instruments execute, and his firme providence by which they are ruled. *Doct. 1.* It is an useful employment for the Church of God, to be much in studying the Lords sovereignty over the world, whereby it is subject to his government and administrations: and that he hath competency of his instruments whereby to execute his purposes, and to exercise his providence and sovereignty in the earth; for, so much is represented to the Church in this vision, wherein God is *Lord of all the earth*, hath instruments sufficient for all the parts of the world, and these instruments, obsequious to receive directions, as *standing before the Lord*, and nimble as *spirit*, or *winder*, and strong as warlike *charets* to execute them. By studying whereof the Church is taught, to exalt God, to stoop to him, so cleave to her duty having such a Protector, and to be comforted in such a portion as he is, whose presence and train, for her behoofe, makes her famous, *Psal. 68. 16, 17.* 2. It will contribute further to settle the mindes of Gods people, and make them so submit to every dispensation, to study that all things are ordered in the world according to the pleasure of God, that his decrees and purposes are, and shall be effectually executed in all the earth, and that his effectuell providence doth overrule all instruments, that nothing be done but what he hath decreed; This is also represented to the Church in this vision, by the *four charets*, (or instruments of God in all the parts of the world)

world) their coming out from between two mountaines of brasſe, that is, his unalterable counſels, which they are ſent forth to put in execution, and his effectual providence by which they are hemmed in on every hand, that they do nothing but according to his pleaſure. This ſtudie will lead the Church to ſee God in every diſpenſation, (which is comfortable when ſhe is reconciled to him,) and to ſee that no ill purpoſes of men can be effectual without him, and that none of his thoughts of peace will be hindered. 3. The counſels and purpoſes of God in governing the world, are deep and unſearchable, rather to be adored and read by the Church, according to the tenour of the Covenant, then pried into, till by his executing and perfecting his work, ſhe be able to ſee and diſcern that which otherwiſe might readily be miſtaken; this is ſignified by the *charers*, coming out of ſome deep valley, between two mountaines, which is obſcure, and cannot eaſily be ſeen into. 4. The Lord hath variety of diſpenſations, according as the condition of men (whether enemies, or the Church) calls for them, laid up in ſtore, and at his command to carve upon, and let out at his pleaſure without controulment; ſo that he is to be ſeen, and his wiſdom, fidelity, juſtice or mercy, &c. to be adored in every one of them, according as they are let forth, and made beautiful in their time, and in reſpect of theſe to-ward whom they are diſpenſed: this is ſignified by *charer-horſes* of all colours, going forth at Gods direction. 5. As the ſtudy of the divine authority of the Word, and what is revealed therein, is that which the Church ought to be much about, in a time when ſhe hath her comforts to bring from thence; ſo in ſuch a time ſhe is to be much in dwelling upon the Word, and ſtirring up her ſelfe to underſtand the riches and fullneſſe thereof: for, by this queſtion, ſo oft propounded, and here repeated by the Prophet, v. 2. we are taught both that nothing in this viſion, or explication of it is invented by him, but all of God, and therefore to be leaned to; and alſo that for obtaining the full comfort of the Scriptures, and of knowing Gods will, laziſſe would be ſhaken off, and God much employed for clearing it up unto us, being a depth not eaſily comprehended or taken up.

Verf. 6. *The black horses which are therein, go forth into the North-countrie, and the white go forth after them, and the grizled go forth toward the South-countrie.*

The scope of the vision is more particularly cleared up, by shewing the particular employment of these instruments, in several parts of the world, designed from their situation in relation to the land of Judah. We need not enquire concerning the red horses, (though some read the Hebrew, as pointing at them also, *these which are therein*, (pointing at the red charers) and the *black horses go forth, &c.*) the number and colour pointing only at sufficiency of means for all parts of the world, and of dispensations as they are needed; whereof only three are expounded. Two of these charers, the black and white, are employed toward the North in Babylon, signifying the destruction of the Babylonians by the Persians, and the deliverance of the Jewes, which being already verified, might confirm the Church, and the godly in it, to wait for the like in time coming. If not also pointing out that the sad condition of the Jewes, who yet remained in Babylon, should at last end in peace and prosperity, many of them coming up afterwards to Judah. A third charer is employed toward Egypt southward to Judah, whither many of the Jewes went with Johanan, Jer. 43, who were to be exercised with a mixed dispensation, as the colour of the horses imports. *Diss.* 1. Wherever sad dispensations the Lord send either upon his people, or the Nations among whom they are, yet he hath a peculiar care of them to provide a good issue of their trouble, and can make sad calamities not to ruine, but be a meanes of their deliverance; for, when the black horses go forth into the North-countrie, the white go forth after them. The ruine of Babel where they remained, proved their delivery, and their own calamities end well: which is yet remarked after it is done, to shew, that God is still the same to ruine enemies, and do good to the Church, and make overturnings, wherein it should seem she would be overwhelmed as well as others, bring about her happinesse. 2. Albeit afflictions and lots which God sends on a people, especially for sin, may be very grievous and sad; yet they have ordinarily more

comfortable issues then afflictions of their own choosing; for, *the white horses go after the black to Babylon*, whither God had sent the Jewes, whereas the charer sent to Egypt, whither they went of their own accord, is *grieted*. 3. Albeit the Lord be justly provoked against his peoples following their own ways, especially under trouble; yet his severity even to them is mixed with mercy; for, the charer sent to the South is not black nor red, but *grieted*.

Verf. 7. *And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walke to and fro thorow the earth, and he said, Get ye hence, walke to and fro thorow the earth: for ye have walked to and fro thorow the earth.*

Whether we understand this of all the charers, whose horses were strong (as the word also signifies) or of the fourth charer only, who having done that particular work shewed to the Prophet, sought to be employed elsewhere, all comes to one purpose, that by Gods allowance and command, they are employed through the earth; Hence learn, 1. As all instruments are subject unto God, and no service can be acceptable to him, but what is warranted by his command: so he hath instruments, (and especially Angels) very ready and willing to seek and take employments, and see them executed; this we are taught in this, *they sought to go that they might walke to and fro through the earth*; and in that having received orders, *they walked to and fro through the earth*. 2. Albeit the Church get now and then a clear sight of some special Providences, yet it is but parts of his way that she is able to take up. His Providence is not idle in all the parts of the world, though she see not so well through it, and it is her comfort to know so much, that his Providence is so universal for her good; for, here is a command *to get hence, and walke to and fro through the earth*, obeyed by them, holding out his providence, and this is discovered to the Prophet for the Churches comfort, though particular actions, done by them, be not declared.

Verf. 8. *Then cried he upon me, and shake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the North-*
convey,

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country, have quieted my Spirit in the North-country.

An account is given to the Prophet of that part of the vision which specially concerned the Church, that the instruments employed in the North, had fulfilled his counsel in severity against Babel, and tenderneſſe toward the Jewes there, as a pledge for future times. *Doct. 1.* Albeit the Lord do effectually execute his purposes in all the world, yet his providence about his Church is (to ſpeak after the manner of men) his ſpecial care, in the ſtudy and knowledge whereof his Church is to acquieſce, albeit many other paſſages be hid from her, therefore it is that the Lord takes pleaſure in giving an account of that paſſage, and declares that only unto the Prophet, leaving the reſt untouched, Then he cried to me, and ſpoke to me, ſaying, Behold, theſe that go toward the North, &c. *2.* The Lord accounts himſelf not a little concerned in the afflictions of his people, and the proſperity of their enemies, nor will he be at reſt till he plague the one, and relieve the other, for, the red and white horſe do quiet his Spirit, which was before commoved, *3.* Whatever work the Lord undertake againſt his enemies, and in delivering his Church, and whatever instruments he employ, there ſhall be nothing left undone or imperfect, or be delayed, but ſhall be fully accompliſhed according to his purpoſe, and as he hath promiſed or threatened; for, ſaith he, They have quieted my Spirit in the North-country, or done all things according to my minde.

Verſ. 9. And the Word of the LORD came unto me, ſaying,

10. Take of them of the captivity, even of Helaiz, of Tobijah, and of Gedaiab, which are come from Babylon, and come thou the ſame day, and go into the houſe of Jofiah the ſonne of Zephaniah.

11. Then take ſilver and gold, and make crownes, and ſet them upon the head of Joſhua the ſonne of Joſedech the High Prieſt.

In the second part of the chapter, we have a promise of Christ the Builder and Governour of his Church, and of the Conversion of strangers, the type whereof is the making of two Crownes, the one of silver, and the other of gold, as sacred signes appointed of God for the uses after-mentioned, and the setting them solemnly on the Head of *Joshua* the Priest. These Crownes are to be made of what was offered by foure men, (the first whereof and the last seems to have had two names, v. 14. at least the first of them, for *Hei* might be brother to *Josab*), who seem not so much to be eminent men amongst them, who were fainting, and made others to faint by their example, and therefore needed to be encouraged, as to be men lately come from *Babylon*, with offerings for themselves, or in name of others; of which for special cause the Crownes are made to encourage them to come and joyne with their brethren, from a promise of Christ, (at that time in whom all that they missed in *Judas* was to be made up) and of the Conversion of strangers, as is after cleared. *Diss.* 1. Where Christ sets up his Church in the world, he can when he pleaseth induce men to joyne themselves therewith; though it seem to bring much outward disadvantage; for, there are of *the captivity which are come from Babylon*, where many of these Jewes thought themselves better accommodated then to leave it for *Judas*. 2. The Lord is very tender of such as are at any paines to seek him, and allowes special encouragement upon them, and commands all diligence to be used for that end; for, this great type, and the explication thereof is for their encouragement, and the Prophet is to come the same day unto the house of *Josab*, or the place where he lodged, if he be one of the number. 3. None are to appear before the Lord empty, but when they come unto him in his Church, they are to give up themselves, and what they have to be at his disposing; this is signified by their bringing *silver and gold*, which the Prophet is to take of them. 4. Albeit our services, and any thing we can offer to God, be of no worth before him, and may justly be rejected, yet such is his graciousnesse that he may make more of our services then we could well expect; for, not only are their gifts accepted, but made use of in contributing to this type, their silver and gold were the matter of the Crowns, 5. The Lord may employ persons to sustain extraordinary relations as types, which it is not lawful for them to exercise in any ordinary way; for *Joshua's* getting two Crowns to be an extraordinary

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traordinary type of Christ in his two offices, was no warrant for *Joshua* in his administrations, to take on him not only the Priestly, but the Kingly office also, whereof some shadow was yet remaining in *Dauids* race, and presently exercised by *Zerubbabel*,

Vers. 12. And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hostes, saying, Behold, the man whose Name is the BRANCH, and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the Temple of the LORD.

Followes the application of this type in two particulars, the first whereof is, of *Joshua's* being crowned with two crowns; which lest any should mistake, it is cleared to him that all this type pointed at Christs coming in the flesh, the true King and Priest of his Church, who albeit in his humiliation he should appear contemptible as a tender branch, yet should he grow up miraculously, and build his own Church, whereof the Temple was a type, and in building whereof he also had a chief hand. *Deff.* 1. Christ manifested in and to his Church, is an excellent and sovereign encouragement, to invite men to come and joyne with her in how low an estate soever she be, for the substance of all this type, and the encouragement held out unto these strangers, to draw them and their brethren out of *Babylon*, is, *Behold, the man whose Name is the BRANCH.* 2. It neither takes away the glory of Christ, nor the encouragement of his people in him and from him, that he was incarnate, and became a man like us, and appeared contemptible, during the state of his humiliation; but rather contributes much to their encouragement, that he came so near unto them, and was so like them in all things, and to his glory, that from so small beginnings he grew to so great an height; and makes his Church to flourish; therefore is he here described: *The man whose Name is the BRANCH*, or, *tender bud*, out of the root of *Jesse*, *who shall grow up* 3. As Christ and his work are still upon the rising and growing hand till his body be perfected in glory; so his own arm and power is able to raise him up beyond all probability, and without all humane helps *he shall grow up out of his place*, that is, out of *Jesse's* withered root, when the glory of *Dauid*

David's family was quite extinct, and out of his place *Nazareth*, which his Name the **BRANCH** in the Original points at, *Mt. 2. 23.* 4. Christ's having his hand at a work, and his engagement to perfect it, ought to be an encouragement to all in their station to put hand to it, especially considering what presage or fore-runner that work may be of a more glorious work to be done by Christ; therefore these Jewes are invited to come and joyn in building the Temple, since Christ was principal undertaker therein, and that by so doing they should set up a clear type of his building his own Church; *And he shall build the Temple of the Lord.*

Verf. 13. Even he shall build the Temple of the LORD, and he shall beare the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a Priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

The promise of Christ's building his own Church, is again repeated for further confirmation; and concerning him, for explaining the type, it is further promised, that in him the glory of that people should shine again, & to him only the glory of building his Church is due that there should be a conjunction of the Kingly and Priestly office in his person; the exercise of both which should sweetly concur to carry on his purposes concerning his people. *Doff. 1.* There is great need of being much studied in the certainty of Christ's carrying on of his own work, and that it depends on him only, whether means be or not; for this end is this promise again repeated, *Even he shall build the Temple of the Lord.* 2. All the glory and excellency of the Church is to be found in Christ, and however she in her self and in her officers may seem very vile; yet she is raised up to glory in him, and all outward pompe that is wanting, is made up in him; this is signified by the two Crowns on *Josias's* head, that however, both the Priesthood and Princely dignity were now contemptible, yet he should raise them to glory in his person: *He shall beare the glory,* though *Zerubbabel* and *Josias* were in a base condition, and had little or no splendor. 3. The glory of rearing up and building a Church to God in the world,

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world, is a burden too heavy for any but Christ to bear, and would crush any meane creature, however they be very ambitious of glory; this also is implied in that *he shall build the Temple, and he shall bear the glory.* 4. Christ alone is all-sufficient for all the affaires of his Church, being invested with all offices that may contribute for her good, and appointed both King and Priest for her; for, *he shall sit and rule, and be a Priest upon his throne.* 5. Christ as he is invested with power and authority, so he is not idle, but actively goes about all affairs, which his offices engage him to; for, *he rules, and is a Priest upon his throne.* 6. Christ hath a stable possession of all his offices and dignities, from which no opposition will remove him to the prejudice of his people, to leave them without an Head, a King or Priest; for, *he shall sit and rule, &c.* his sitting points out his stable and settled possession. 7. Albeit Christ be invested with many and divers offices, yet considering that he is God all-sufficient, none of them shall hinder another, nor shall he be overcharged with many employments toward particular souls, his Church in general, or his enemies, but shall carry them on altogether, and particularly his Kingly and Priestly office, though very different, the one being for execution of justice, the other for obtaining mercy and pardon, shall sweetly concur to work out peace and safety for his people, his Priestly office tending to purchase, and his Kingly office to make his purchase forth-coming, and to maintain and defend it to them; for, *the counsel of peace shall be between them both, that is, his two offices.*

Verf. 14. *And the crownes shall be to Helem, and to Tobijah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen the sonne of Zephaniah for a memorial, in the Temple of the LORD.*

15. *And they that are far off shall come and build in the Temple of the LORD, and ye shall know that the LORD of hostes hath sent me unto you. And this shall come to passe, if ye will diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God.*

The second particular explained in this type is, of the making of the typical crowns of their offerings who came from Babylon, and the crowning of Joshua before them. After the crowns had been made use of on Joshua's head to represent Christ, they were to be laid up as a monument in the Temple for these men, not only to be a witness of their liberality, or a token to confirm their faith of the promised Messiah, but as a pledge, that many both Jewes in Babylon, and strangers, should come from afar (as they did) and joyne in building of the Temple, but especially to make up a Church to God, some shadows whereof appeared afterward in strangers adorning the Temple with their gifts, as now it was by their crowns, and in the help that they got from the Persian Court, in sending up their brethren under Ezra. *Dott. 1.* The Lords dispensations and manifestations toward his Church, ought to be of long and enduring use unto her, and may contribute to many purposes if they be well studied: therefore beside the present use of these crowns, they are to be set up for a memorial in the Temple, to teach long after, and to be a pledge yet further, that *they that are far off shall come.* 2. Such as in times of great discouragement, do appear for strengthening the hands of the Church, are singularly taken notice of, and may expect singular favours for these men coming from Babylon with their offerings, in a time when the lingring of the Jewes there was the Churches grief; have this honour put upon them, that the Crowns shall be to them for a memorial, as a testimony of their zeal and affection, a pledge of the Messiahs coming, and of strangers joyning to the Lord. 3. The hope of enlargement of the Church, is matter of great encouragement to the truly godly, and that God will bring these who are far off, lying by, or opposite to the work, to joyne in it when he pleaseth, and will accept of them and their service when they come: this is an encouragement to the Church of the Jewes; *They that are far off shall come and build in the Temple:* and may be still an encouragement to them who are far off, and have a minde to come. 4. Such as come to joyne with Gods people are not to be idle and uselesse, but to study in their stations to contribute somewhat for edifying and building up the body; for, *they that come, must build in the Temple of the Lord.*

Unto this doctrine two things are subjoynd by way of Conclusion,

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clusion, 1. That their own experience should prove that Christ the Mediator was sent to reveal these prophecies, and that the Prophet had authority to publish them, which was in part verified unto them, by their getting help to the work, from these they little expected it of, and is now fully verified to the Church in after-ages, as their successors. 2. That it was requisite on their part to be diligent, in obedience to Gods commands, if they would not be hinderers of the performance of promises, so far as they could, and would not deprive themselves of benefit by their accomplishment. *Diss.* 1. What ever debates may arise in the mindes of Gods people, concerning the truth of promises, yet experience and the event will put it out of all controversie, that God is true: for, *Ye shall know that the Lord of hostes hath sent me*, which may be understood of Christ sent to reveal these things to the Prophet, or rather of the Prophet sent to publish them to the Church in the Lords Name, as v. 9. 2. The Lords accomplishing and performing what he hath foretold in his Word, should lead his people back to a new and serious consideration of the truth of it, that their confidence may rest on it in new exigents, without hesitation; for this is the use of what God doth, that we *may know God hath sent his Word by his servants*, and learne to magnifie it as true. 3. Albeit the performance of the Lords absolute promises be not suspended upon mens doing of duty; yet neglect of duty may keep back the performance of many particular conditional promises; may justly be charged with impeding the performance of all promises to mens power, and doth alwayes hinder the comfort and fruit of performed promises from coming to the guilty man; for, saith he, *This shall come to passe, if ye will diligently obey, &c.* Not that the promise of Christs coming, and Conversion of the Gentiles depended on the Jewes obedience, but that their neglect of duty would hinder mens present favouring of the work of the Temple, whom their sins had made enemies of a long time, and that they did what they could; if they sinned, to obstruct all, and should certainly have no comfort by these spiritual promises. 4. The people of God are then accounted to make conscience of their duty when they submit to what God injoynes in his Word, however it suit with their inclinations; when they are careful to hear and seek out Gods minde in his Word, not shifting light; when they are diligent and active in endeavouring obedience, as becomes to great a Lord

Lord to be obeyed by his creatures, trembling lest they be found out of the way, in a course of disobedience, or heighning convictions, and condemning the light of information: and when all this obedience is performed, not as a cause of righteousness and justification, but as a fruit of faith, closing with God, reconciled in Christ, and as a testimony of thankfulness; for so is duty here described: *If ye will diligently obey, (or hearken to) the voice of the Lord your God, which includes their absolute subjection to the Word, their enquiring and hearkening to its directions, and both these with great diligence, and as a fruit of their being in Covenant with God.*

CHAP. VII.

IN this Chapter, occasion of a case of conscience propounded by some from *Babylon*, concerning their fasting in remembrance of their desolations, v. 1, 2, 3. The Lord sends out his Prophet, to condemn all these their fastings, and their feasting also, v. 4, 5, 6. and their neglect of obedience, which if it had been studied, might have prevented their exile, and such questions, v. 7. And (to clear up their duty, and the right way of composing all differences betwixt God and that Nation,) the Prophet at Gods command repeats the whole procedure betwixt God and them, to wit, that God had given faithful warning to them, and laid their duty before them, v. 8, 9, 10. that they had been rebellious and disobedient, v. 11, 12. — and that therefore God in his justice had let forth his displeasure, neglected them in their trouble, and brought that on them and their land, which their sins had deserved, v. — 12, 13, 14.

Verf. 1.

AND it came to passe in the fourth year of King Darius, that the Word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, in the fourth day of the ninth month, even in Chislem.

2. When they had sent unto the house of God, Sherezer, and Regem-melech, and their men to pray before the LORD.

3. And

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3. And to speak unto the Priests, which were in the house of the LORD of hostes, and to the Prophets, saying, Should I weep in the fifth moneth, separating my selfe as I have done these so many yeares?

Hitherto this Prophet hath been for most part employed in receiving and communicating to the Church several visions: Now there followes a doctrinal Sermon, occasioned by a case of conscience propounded, whereof the rise was thus: the people of the Jewes during their captivity observed divers yearly Fasts; in remembrance of their many desolations, of which, *chap. 8. 19.* one in the tenth moneth, in remembrance of the besieging of the city, which began in that moneth, *2 Kings 25. 1.* one in the fourth, because the city was then taken, *2 Kings 25. 3.* *Jer. 52. 6.* one in the seventh moneth, because of the scattering of the remnant of the Jewes, when *Gedaliah* was slain, *2 Kings 25. 25.* and one in the fifth moneth in remembrance of the burning of the Temple and City in that moneth, *2 Kings 25. 8, 9.* Now the City being again inhabited, and the work of the Temple far advanced (being two yeares since they had gone to work again; comparing *v. 1.* with *Hag. 1. 15.*) two chief Ambassadors with their traine are sent (belike from these in *Babylon*;) to worship God, and to propound the case to the Lords ordinary or extraordinary Ministers; whether it were needful to continue that Fast or not? *Doct. 1.* However the Lord in his wisdom may, when he pleases, forbear to employ extraordinary meanes and dispensations, even in the time when such are in use, and leave his people to the use of ordinary meanes; yet upon new emergents he will not faile to appear as formerly: for here, after *Zecharies* first Sermon, containing the former visions, which was in the second yeare of *Darius*, *chap. 1. 7.* we finde no more revelations, till the fourth yeare of King *Darius*; yet when this new case comes to be solved, the Word of the Lord came unto him. 2. To know the minde of God in our duty, is worthy of much pains, and matters of Religion should be looked upon as of very particular concernment to every one: therefore they think a solemne ambassage little enough to seek resolution of th is question; They sent unto the house of God, *Sherazer* and *Regem-melech* with their men. And though they were more then one of them who came, and far more concerned in

it, yet the question is propounded as by every one in particular, *Should I weep, &c?* 3. As matters of our duty may be oft-times very dark and unclear, for our humiliation, and up-stirring to make use of meanes; so it is not sufficient that a person or people employ God in their particular strait, unless in their ordinary course they be seekers of God: and such as would have light from God, or his servants useful to them, would depend much on God, and be much in prayer to him, therefore are they sent, by reason of this dark case, *to pray before the Lord, and to speak to the Priests, &c.* To testify, that they were seekers of God, and of the same Religion with their brethren, and when they are to employ the Priests and Prophets for light; they begin at prayer to God. 4. Ministers of the Word are bound to be able to resolve the cases of Gods people, not only in general doctrine, but in particular emergents and difficulties: for, *the Priests and the Prophets are to be spoken to* in this businesse. 5. No means appointed of God for our help in difficulties, is to be neglected or vilipended by these who expect a blessing; for, they are to *speak*, both to *Priests and Prophets*: both ordinary and extraordinary meanes (where they are) are to be used. 6. Solemn fastings and humiliations, because of Gods displeasure, ought to have much inward sense evidenced by separation from outward delights, and mourning; for so the question imports they had done, *wept and separated themselves*: though that be not all required of an afflicted sinful people, nor yet to make a Fast approved, yet it is a part of the duty. 7. Whatever general instructions may be gathered from their propounding of this case, worthy of our imitation; yet the question, as propounded by them, is many wayes faulty, which serves also for our warning; as 1. There is a great deal of formality in sending such an embassy about a ceremonie, when yet they neglected the substance of Religion; Formality may make great shew of little, and most noise about that which is to least purpose. 2. Much unbelief appears here; for, in that they enquire about omitting this Fast only, they insinuate that they doubted of removing their other calamities, for which they fasted also, (as we will heare afterward,) and so go no further then their sense; yea, in questioning about this same, they insinuate their doubting that the Temple should be perfected. Unbelief will receive or expect no more then it seeth, and so breeds us much vexing exercise. 3. Much ostentation that they had done it so long, for

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so many yeares, which now they look upon as somewhat when the work is going on; when the Lord blesteth any work that we have been using endeavours about, our hearts are then very ready to think much of our doing. 4. Much unsafe walking having no ground of their doubt, but their old custome, *Shall I weep as I have done these so many yeares?* how small ground and warrant soever there was of this their fasting, yet many have no better then custome and education, for their ground in following the true Religion, which makes very unsure work. 5. That they now think of laying aside this duty, (whatever warrant they had for it, of which they do not doubt nor enquire concerning it) bewrayes, partly how ready mens hearts are to weary of duties, especially if they be any thing hard: and partly, that when men have gotten some deliveries, they are ready to dream of having no more to do with fastings and humiliations: which is folly to expect, so long as we are within time.

Verf. 4. Then came the Word of the LORD of hostes unto me, saying,

5. Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the Priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh moneth, even those seventy years; did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?

The Lord sends out his Prophet to declare his minde concerning this question, not only to these who propounded it, but unto all the people of the land. and the Priests also. And before he give a full answer to this question to their contentment, he premies in this chapter somewhat by way of reproof of their way. And first, he reproves their way, not only in this Fast, but in all the rest, (whereof he names one,) as being faultie in that it was not done to God. Whereby we are to understand, partly that they were of their own appointment, and not enjoined by God, it not being lawful for them to appoint such dayes for fasting, unlesse the Prophets amongst them had in Gods Name appointed and allowed of these Fasts, of which we read not. For however all these calamities did call them to fasting and weeping, and Gods imposing the necessity by his dispensati-

ons, did warrant them to set apart some time for that purpose; and however they might agree to do so from time to time, during the time it was revealed by God, that their captivity should continue: yet it was not lawful for them to fixe such anniversary dayes by dedication, or consecration, and sanctification, as making it unlawful to take that day again for worldly employments, if providence so called, or unlawful to do worldly businesse, if called to them on that day, even as the work of their calling at that time, whereas works of necessity are to be done on the Sabbath with a Sabbath-dayes heart; or as if the service were more acceptably performed on that day then on another: as they chose the very dayes of their greatest calamities for their Fasts, as if the time should have influence on the work. All these are to encroach upon the Prerogative of God, and far lesse is it now lawful to fix such anniversary dayes, either for fasting or thanksgiving: seeing that (beside the want of authority so to do) we have not such certainty what our future condition shall be, as they had during the seventy yeares captivity, and know not but providence may call us to rejoyce, when our time is to weep; and to weep when our time is to rejoyce; and so it belongs to God only to fixe times for such duties, whose providence can make our condition suitable to the duty of the time. But beside this defect, the Lords reproof doth also strike at the manner of their performing these Fasts, as being done in such a way (whatever warrant there were for them) as could not be acceptable to him. *Doct.* 1. When the Lord speaks his minde u to his people, and especially against their formal, and inveterate customes, it is needful to take him up in his absolute dominion and omnipotency, as being able to crush them who contemn his Word, and to make them happy who follow his way, whatever it seem to promise in it self: therefore is this message called *the Word of the Lord of hostes*. 2. The Word of God, and the doctrine therein contained, concerning our duty, is of general concernment unto all, however many times only few are sensible of their need of it: for this cause it is, that the answer is not given only to these who enquired, but *to all the people of the Land*, as being a doctrine of general use to all. 3. Such as ought to be instructers of others, may oft-times turne as far aside, and need instruction as much as any, for the very *Priests* who were enquired concerning this case, v. 3. are to be spoken to and taught, and so the Church had been in a
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sad case, if the Lord (who is never wanting to his Church,) had not provided this remedy of an extraordinary Prophet, as is marked on v. 1. 4. The Lord accepts no service; how glorious-like soever, as done to him, that is not commanded and enjoined by himself; for, saith he of these Fasts of their appointment; *Did ye at all fast to me, even to me?* even albeit they both *fasted and mourned*. A will-worshipper fancies a god in his own imagination, to accept his service, who is not the God who hath revealed himself in his Word; or at best is a mistaken God. 5. The excellencie and worth of our service, and our happinesse thereby, doth not consist in what measure of performance we can attaine unto, but in Gods accepting of it as service through Christ, which we are chiefly to look unto, and have a care of, and not to be discouraged with mean endeavours, if he respect them, nor puffed up with fairest flourishes, while that is wanting; so much is implied in that doubled question: *Did ye it to me, even to me?* 6. As humility is a sure symptome of one who serves God in a right manner; so it may humble us in performances before the Lord, to consider that our services cannot profit him, nor is he obliged to us for them, otherwise then by free grace: so much also is imported in this question, for in opposition to their ostentation in propounding their question, the Lord layes them low by telling them it was not done to him, all the profit (if there were any) would be their own. 7. Days of fasting and humiliation, with never so much sense and feeling, can never be acceptable to God, so long as only the sense of our own calamities sets us on work, and we rest there without attaining to sense of sin, and minding to turn to God; this is another fault reprehended in their fasting; *Did ye at all fast unto me?* had ye any sense of the injuries done to me, or purpose to amend them? was it not because of your own miseries ye fasted and mourned? 8. Men do for most part mistake or remain ignorant of their own condition, and carelesse of what the Lords servants say, through want of serious examination of their own conscience. A tender, active and well-informed conscience would shew much, as the Lords servants do say; therefore the Lord appeales to their own consciences in this question, as able to solve the doubt, and plead for him, if it were put to it; *Did ye fast unto me?*

Verf. 6. And when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for your selves, and drink for your selves?

He proves their abuse of fasting from their sinful way of eating and drinking after their fastes were over, and their feasting at other times, in which they satisfied their own lusts, without respect to his glory. Hence learn, 1. It is the duty of all, especially of the Lords people; not only in their immediate worship, but in their common and ordinary affaires, and use of ordinary refreshments, to do them as service to him, and eye his glory in him; for, it was their fault, that they *did eat for themselves, and drink for themselves*. 2. Such as in their ordinary conversation do not minde and eye God, may justly be suspected as sleighters of his immediat worship: and such as do abuse prosperity, do prove that adversity hath not been sanctified; for they fasted not to God; because they *did eat for themselves, and drink for themselves*, both in their ordinary refreshments, and prosperous conditions.

Ver. 7. Should ye not hear the words which the LORD hath cried by the former Prophets, when Jerusalem was inhabited and in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her, when men inhabited the South of the Plain.

The second fault which the Lord finds with their way is, that they were taken up with these observations, but neglected that which was substantial: He declareth that it were rather their duty to hearken to, and obey thele commands which God had enjoyned them by his Prophets, when all was well with them in Judah, when Jerusalem and all the cities thereof were yet entire, and the land inhabited, which if they had been believed and obeyed, they had not been driven into exile, nor needed such questions. He mentions *the South and the Plain*, (as it is in the Original,) because Judahs portion, and these who joyned with him, lay partly Southward to Jerusalem, and partly in the Plain

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toward the Philistines, *Josb. 15. 1, 2. Obad. v. 19.* and so it comprehends the whole land; The word also rendered *South*, doth signifie in the first place *dry and desert ground*, and by consequence *the South*, because the heat of the Sun made these places barren; and so it cometh all to one purpose, to shew, that not only *Jerusalem* and all her cities, but all the countrey was peopled, when God warned them of their duty and danger; and that not only fruitful Plaines, but even the hills, (which were usually dry in *Judea*, and may be understood here in opposition to the Plain) and other desert places were frequented with people dwelling therein. *Doct. 1.* External performances of external duties of Religion are nothing in Gods sight, where there is not study of obedience to all his revealed Will, nor will howling under miserie avails, while wickednesse is kept under their tongue; for, so saith the Lord to these Fasters, *Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried?* 2. The Lord in all ages is uniforme and like himself, in approving and enjoining of duty, and in disliking of sin, yesterday, and to day, the same for ever; for, the Lord here requires the same he required of their fathers, *Should ye not heare the words which the Lord hath cried by the former Prophets?* 3. The longer the Lord by his Word hath been pressing duty upon his people, they ought to heed it the more, lest judgement prove the sadder; for, he presseth a doctrine that had been long since cried, to be so much the rather heard. 4. The Lords chastising a people for sin and disobedience, doth not warrant them to look on their deliverance from the chastisement, as a full assurance of their being reconciled, as if their strokes had made up all; but being delivered they are to make conscience of obedience, otherwise the controversy still stands, whatever deliverance they get, and they may expect to smart again. Therefore, after all their captivity, they must *hear and obey*. 5. It may help us to take heed to what God sayes in a sad time, when we consider that if it had been hearkened unto, it might have prevented much misery; for, so is this doctrine commended, *it was cried when Jerusalem was inhabited, and in prosperity, &c.* that so the thoughts of their former prosperity, which had ended in sad desolation, might let them see the ill of former neglect, and stir them up to be more serious.

Verf. 8. *And the Word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,*

9. *Thus speaketh the LORD of hostes, saying, Execute true judgement, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother.*

10. *And oppresse not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poore, and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.*

To clear further this last challenge, and to justify the Lords way in all that came on this people, and teach them how to compose the controversie: The Prophet Zecharie gets a commission to clear the whole procedure betwixt God and their fathers, for them to make use of, and not leane to their Fasts: and first, by repeating the doctrine of the former Prophets to their fathers, (which standeth yet in force to oblige their children; and therefore as God *spake* it, so he yet *speaketh* it,) he cleares that God had required of their fathers, that they would prove their faith and sincerity in the true Religion, by the exercise of justice and mercy toward all, especially the afflicted; and that both in actions and inclinations, as is required in the second Table. *Doct. 1.* When the Lord hath let forth his displeasure against a people, it concernes them who are reserved to be well informed in the proceeding and causes of it, that they may lay it to heart, and know how to make their peace: therefore doth Zecharie get a new Commission, to repeat this unto them, which had been said and spoken to their fathers; *The Word of the Lord came to Zechariah saying, Thus saith the Lord of hostes, &c.* or, thus he *spake* to them, and thus he *speaketh* to you, the word will import both. 2. Obedience to God in the duties of the second Table, is the true touch-stone whereby to try sincerity in Religion, and obedience in duties of the first Table; this was it by which God tried his Church in all ages; *Execute true judgement, &c.* 3. Our doing of things required of us in point of justice is no such proof of sincerity, unlesse acts of tenderneffe and affection, enjoyned by charity, be made conscience of likewise; therefore they are conjoynd here: *Execute*

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true judgement, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother. 4. For right performance of works of justice and mercy, it is requisite that we put on affection one to another, as coming of one root, whatever difference there be in outward dispensations: and especially to men of the same Religion, as being tied to them in more near relation: therefore are they designed toward whom we are to walk in these duties, as brethren: *Shew mercy every man to his brother.* 5. It is a special proof of an heart subjected to God, and his feare, and filled with true love to our neighbour, when one is bound up from wronging of the afflicted, or taking advantage of their low condition to run over them, and when conscience makes a man tender and sensible of their affliction, and as afraid to do them wrong, as if they were a strong party, able to repay injuries; so is here required: *Oppresse not the widow, nor the fatherlesse, the stranger, nor the poor.* 6. Such as would approve themselves to God in their obedience, ought not only to look to their actions, but to watch over their very inclinations, which are the fountain of their actions, and are only seen by God; for to all these commands is added: *And let none of you imagine evil against his brother in his heart.*

Verf. 11. *But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their eares, that they should not hear.*

12. *Yea, they made their hearts as an Adamant stone, lest they should hear the Law, and the words which the LORD of hostes hath sent in his Spirit by the former Prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hostes.*

13. *Therefore it is come to passe, that as he cried, and they would not hear, so they cried, and I would not heare, saith the LORD of hostes.*

14. *But I scattered them with a whirlwinde among all the Nations whom they knew not: thus the Land was desolate after them, that no man passed thorow nor returned: for they laid the pleasant Land desolate.*

In the next place, the Prophet at Gods command, gives an account of what had been their fathers part in reference to these duties: when God thus exhorted them, they obstinately rebelled, refusing to hearken, despising to take on the yoke of his obedience, yea, stopping their own ears, and hardening their heart, against the commands, or conviction for the contempt thereof, to the grieving of the Spirit who spake in the Prophets. *Dock. 1.* It is the duty of men to heare when God speaks to them, and to take on what yoke he imposes thereby, how grievous soever it be to flesh and blood; for, it was their great fault, that *they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder*, as an undantoned beast from the yoke. 2. Men by nature are very high-bended against God, and against being subject unto him, and have an antipathy against holinesse, and the way which the Word prescribes unto them to follow; so is imported in their *refusing to hearken, pulling away the shoulder*: and in their guarding care and heart, lest the Word should prevaile with them, as *Psal. 98. 4. 5.* 3. As disobedient sinners, living under the Ministry of the Word, cannot but be persued with some convictions troubling them, unlesse they be given over to a reprobate sense: so it is a dreadful character when they shift convictions, and make it all their studie how to sin without disturbance; for so did these, *They stopped their ears, that they should not hear.* 4. So long as the Word heard doth any way affect a sinner, there is some hope of him, how rebellious or shifting soever he be; but the most desperate and lamentable temper is, when sinners have so far put out the light of their own minde, blunted the edge of their conscience, deaded their affections, and confirmed their hearts in sin, that they can go on boldly, and without remorse, heare what they will: this is the height of spiritual plagues; *Yea, they made their hearts as an Adamant, lest they should hear, &c. 4.* They are the most stubborn and obdured of all sinners, who living under the Word, have learned to contemn it, who have blinded themselves by opposing clear light, and who have sinfully hardened their owne hearts, and added to their natural obduration by despising commands, sleighting and rejecting of convictions and challenges; Such, not only *stop their ears*, but *make their hearts as an Adamant stone*, which is the hardest of stones. 6. The sin of disobedience unto the Word, is an opposition not unto men, but unto the Spirit of God who employes them, and speaks by them;

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them : who though in his special operations of grace he works effectually and invincibly : yet in his perswasions by the Word, working as a moral agent, is oft-times resisted and opposed, for such is their sin here, they would not heare the Law, which the Lord of hostes sent in his Spirit by the former Prophets : See, Acts 7. 51. Isa. 63. 10.

In the last place, the Prophet gives an account of Gods just procedure, in punishing this their carriage : as they provoked the Lord exceedingly to anger, so he let it break forth upon them in sad judgements, under which he (justly recompencing their rebellion) would not hear them to deliver them ; and did suddenly and violently cast them out of their land, and scatter them among strangers, as chaffe before a whirlwinde, and laid their land desolate, which was to be charged upon their sins, which had polluted it. *Doct. 1.* Contempt of, and opposition unto the Word, doth provoke God to hot, and more then ordinary displeasure, which will break forth irresistibly when the iniquity is come to the height, as being the displeasure of an Omnipotent Lord ; for, *Therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hostes.* 2. As God can make the stoutest hearted sinner, who cares least for him, stand sensibly in need of his help, when he pleaseth ; inasmuch that a favourable look of God, and his interposing will be his only refuge ; so it is just with God to recompence his contempt of Gods Word, with not regarding his cry in his strait ; and when the Lord seems not to heare prayer in trouble, he calls us thereby to lay to heart, and be humbled for our not hearkening to his Word : for, *Therefore it came to passe, that as I cried, and they would not hear, so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hostes.* 3. Gods pursuing a controversie against his Church, makes enemies endeavours successful and dreadful, and her opposition in vain ; for, *I scattered them with a whirlwinde, which cannot be resisted.* 4. It is a sore judgement, and the fruit of contempt of the Word and Ordinances, when the people of God are scattered from the fellowship one of another, and cast among strangers, with whom they can have no communion, especially in Ordinances ; *I scattered them among all the Nations whom they knew not.* 5. It is no small addition to a judgement, or aggravation of guilt, to consider the desolation that sin brings upon a land for the sinners sake ; especially upon a land wherein God hath dwelt, which

which is the only beauty of a land, able to supply the want of all other pleasure; for, *Thus the land, even the pleasant land was desolate.* 6. Albeit all calamities for sin are to be ascribed unto God, as the author and inflictor thereof in justice; yet guilty sinners procuring the stroke, are to look on it as their deed, and themselves as justly charged with all that a land, the Church, or others suffer: for, *They laid the pleasant land desolate.* 7. The tenderneſſe of God toward his people is ſuch, as in greateſt ſeverity he ſtill doth ſomewhat that ſpeaks ground of hope of future mercy: for, *the lands being desolate after them, that no man paſſed through or returned,* was not only a judgement for ſin, but a mercy, that during their captivity no Nation about did ſit down and poſſeſſe their land, but it was left void till they ſhould return to it, and have none to contend with them for poſſeſſion.

CHAP. VIII.

IN this Chapter, 1. The Lord encourages the Jewes againſt the grounds of their diſtruſt, by ſetting before them, his affection toward them, evidenced in their late deliverance, v. 1, 2, aſſuring them of his being reconciled unto them, and of his purpoſe to reſtore them to their wonted priviledges, v. 3. that they ſhould increaſe and multiplie in much peace, v. 4, 5. which his power was able to effectuate, v. 6. and that he would gather his people from all quarters, and bring them to their land, v. 7, 8. 2. The Lord exhorts them to make uſe of theſe encouragements, to ſtrengthen them to go on in building the Temple, and to hearken to the Prophets, ſtirring them up thereunto, conſidering the great change of Gods dealing, and bleſſings which they had foretold, and had really come on them ſince they began to build, and were yet more to be leſſen forth upon them, v. 9, 10, 11, 12. And that God was to make them as remarkable an example of his bleſſing, as they had been of his curſe, v. 13. and would as certainly perform theſe promiſes, as he had formerly executed his threatnings, v. 14, 15. 3. The Lord exhorts them to ſtudy to pleaſe him, in following true piety and juſtice, v. 16, 17. promiſing to give them cauſes of feaſting inſtead of their Faſts, v. 18,

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v. 18, 19. and that many Gentiles should be converted by the Ministry of Jews, and that they should be much honour'd, because of their enjoying the true Religion, v. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Verse 1. *A* Gain, the Word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying,

2. Thus saith the LORD of hostes, I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy: and I was jealous for her with great fury.

In this Chapter, the Lord goes on in answering that question propounded concerning their fasting, as appears, v. 19. and as the Lord found much to be reprov'd in their way in the former Chapter: so also, considering that these questions flow'd in part from their discouragement, and doubtfulnesse how matters would succeed; therefore he subjoyns unto the reproof several grounds of encouragement unto them, whereof the first is taken from his marriage-affection toward them, as they might reade in what he had done of late, his destroying of *Babel*, and delivering them, being an unquestionable evidence of his love toward them, and of his indignation toward their enemies.

Doct. 1. When the Lord is most severely reprov'g his people for sin, it is not his purpose to drive any sensible soul into discouragement, but he allows them to strengthen themselves that challenges may work the better; therefore is this doctrine subjoyned to the former, lest they should mistake his scope and purpose in it. 2. The authority of God speaking in his Word, is to be much and often thought upon by all such as desire the benefit of Scripture-comforts; therefore albeit this be but a part of the former Sermon, yet it is found necessary to repeat the Prophets Commission; *The Word of the Lord of hostes came unto me*, in regard that many promises here made, could only be assured to them from his being God; and for this end is he so oft brought in speaking in all the Chapter. 3. The fountain of the Churches encouragement, is in Gods free love and marriage-affection, which as it doth not break off in affliction, so will it be very severe in avenging injuries done to such as are beloved of him; for so is here held forth: *I was jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I was jealous for her with great*

great fury. His jealousy proves he is married, his fury testifies how much he resents their affliction, and both these concur to comfort her. 4. The Lord hath at all times prevented his Church and people, with such manifestations of himself, as may be abundant proof of his affection toward them; and ground of encouragement for the time to come: therefore he leads this people back to what had been done, especially in their late deliverance, to clear this truth, and encourage them for the future; *I was jealous, &c.*

Verse 3. *Thus saith the LORD, I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the LORD of hosts, the holy mountain.*

The second ground of encouragement is, that God was now reconciled to them again, would dwell among them as of old, and restore them to the dignity and priviledges they formerly enjoyed. *Doff.* 1. The Lords being reconciled unto a people, and their enjoying his favour, is a special ground of their encouragement, especially that after just wrath he will deigne them with mercy, and be at paines to make up the friendship; for, thus he encourageth them; *Thus saith the Lord, I am returned to Zion.* 2. When the Lord is reconciled unto his people, he will manifest his presence unto them, and be as near and careful to help every grievance, as the heart is to supply every member; for, *I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem,* saith he. 3. Reconciliation with God, is the way to recover a peoples lost honour and priviledges, and to make them enjoy them and the comfort of them; for, upon his returning look what made her eminent before, and it shall be restored. She shall be called by her old names, which is not a promise of a bare title only, but that she shall be eminent in her duty, and the priviledges and mercies following thereupon, shall be as visible as if they were her name. 4. It is the great honour of a people, to enjoy, and sincerely to adhere unto and profess the truth of God, as he hath revealed it in his Word: to adorne that Profession with fidelity and uprightness in matters of the second Table; and to be the

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the people to whom God verifieth the truth of his promises: so are we here taught, *Jerusalem shall be called a City of truth,* in place of her idolatry, and corrupting the worship of God, her double dealing in her conversation, and her feeling the sad fruits of threatenings. 5. To have relation unto God, and be owned as his, speaks much honour to a people, that he, unto whom all things belong, should appropriate them unto himself, as a peculiar lot, to be cared for in an especial way: this honour is imported in that name, *the mountain of the Lord of hostes.* 6. As holiness becometh a people who are the Lords; so it is their special honour and dignity to be such, and a commendation to the truth they profess when they hold a good conscience with it: for, *this mountain shall be called the holy mountain.*

Verf. 4. Thus saith the LORD of hostes, There shall yet old men, and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staffe in his hand, for very age.

5. And the streets of the City shall be full of boyes and girles playing in the streets thereof.

The third ground of encouragement is held forth in a temporal promise of their increasing in number, and enjoying of peace. Whereas they were now a few of many, they should again be many, men and women living unto old and decrepit age, and a numerous issue springing up to succeed them: and whereas the sword had cut them off in their cities, *Lam. 2. 21. and 5. 11, 12, 13, 14.* and they might feare the like, considering the times, yet he promiseth that old men should walk, and young children play in the streets, as in times of great peace. *Doff. 1.* The encrease of a people, (especially such as are members of the Church,) and peaceable times with the common refreshments thereof, in living to old age, want of terrour, not being cut off by violent deaths, childrens recreations, and growing up without feare of enemies, &c. are in their own kinde, choice mercies to be acknowledged where they are, and to be a cause of humiliation where they are wanting: for, the promise of this is a ground of encouragement here. See *Pf. 78. 61, 63, 64. and 144.*

12, --- 15. 2. A people reconciled to God, and adhering to the true spiritual privileges of Gods presence, shall enjoy as much outward prosperity as is for their good; for this promise is subjoynted to the former, as a fruit of them.

Verſ. 6. Thus ſaith the LORD of hoſtes, If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in theſe dayes, ſhould it alſo be marvellous in mine eyes, ſaith the LORD of hoſtes?

In regard theſe promiſes might ſeem improbable and impoſſible to be performed, conſidering that the Jewes were at that time but a deſpicable remnant, and the times full of dangers and feares; the Lord removes all difficulties, by leading them to look on him to whom nothing is impoſſible. *Doct. 1.* As faith is very neceſſary for honouring of God, and our owne comfort in receiving his promiſes; ſo it is no ſmall difficulty to attain to it. Things promiſed may ſeem very impoſſible, not only to carnal men, but ſometimes even to the Lords people; for, this confirmation of the former doctrine ſhewes, that he expects faith to cloſe with what he ſaith; and its being *marvellous* or *bid* (a thing which they cannot ſee through as feaſible or poſſible) ſhewes their temper. 2. The fountain of much unbelief is, mens looking to themſelves and their preſent hard condition, and receiving no more truth then reaſon and probability, thus pre-occupied, will convince them of; for, this is marvellous, becauſe they looked on themſelves, as *the remnant of the people*, and on *theſe dayes* as hard dayes. 3. The way to attain to faith in hard and difficult times is, to eye God who makes the promiſe, and give him the glory of being God, of faithfulneſſe in promiſing, and Omnipotency to perform and overcome impoſſibilities, whereever we be: for he retures their unbelief by leading them from themſelves to eye him: *The Lord of hoſtes, in whoſe eyes it is not marvellous.* 4. A people taking up God rightly, will, themſelves being Judges, condeſcend, that it is a wronging of God to lay any thing in oppoſition to his power as able to over-balance it, or to diſtruſt his promiſes, whereever they ſee in the world or their own condition to render them improbable: for, in this he appeals to themſelves,

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themselves; If it be marvellous in your eyes, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hostes.

Verf. 7. Thus saith the LORD of hostes, Behold, I will save my people from the East-country, and from the West-country.

8. And I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in Truth and in Righteousnesse.

The fourth ground of encouragement, (which also cleareth the promise of their increase) is, that he will gather them from all parts of the world, where they were scattered, (comprehended under East and West, as *Psal.* 113. 3. *Mal.* 1. 11. *Psal.* 50. 1.) and bring them to Jerusalem and Judea, and renew the Covenant with them: which was verified at several times after this Prophecie till Christ came, beside what further accomplishment of it may be reserved till Israels Conversion. *Doct.* 1. Such as are following their duty, though with much hesitation and discouragement, because of the avernesse of others leaving them alone in it, may expect confirmation from God, and that in due time, (if it be for their good) such as have weakened their hands shall joyne and strengthen them; for, this promise of the gathering of Gods people is given to encourage them, who by reason of their paucity, and the difficulties they met with, were ready to think they were come too soon home. 2. In erect in God will bring a people out of a low condition, and gather them after a sad scattering; for, Behold, I will save my people from the East-country, and from the West-country, and will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. 3. Particular favours and deliverances are then comfortable to a people; when the Lord either makes or renewes a Covenant with them, giving himself unto them with these favours, assuring them that old kindnesse stands yet firme, and undertaking for their part, to make them such as he will accept of, and may continue these blessings with; therefore is the renewing of the Covenant subjoynd, wherein God undertakes for both parties, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. 4. Where God enters into a Covenant with his people, he intends really to perform

perform all that he engages to do, without all dissimulation, so that it may be trusted to as a portion; for, this Covenant is in truth. 5. The sure foundation of the Churches comfort by a Covenant, is the righteousness of Christ, whereby she is made able to stand before God: and the right way to confirme her of her interest therein, is a study of righteous and upright walking before him: both these are implied in that second property, that the Covenant shall be in righteousness.

Vers. 9. Thus saith the LORD of hostes, Let your hands be strong, ye that beare in these dayes these words by the mouth of the Prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the LORD of hostes was laid, that the Temple might be built.

These encouragements being published, the Lord exhorts them to make use of them, in chearful going about the work of building the Temple, to which also are subjoynd further motives and encouragements. And first, that they are exhorted to it by these Prophets, who these two yeares since they began again to work, had encouraged them unto it, and not only assured them that it would be perfected, but had foretold other blessings, which had come to passe, as is after cleared. *Doct. 1.* As encouragements from God are to be made use of, to make us faithful to him, and in his work: and as the work of God would be followed with much faith and alacrity, so men have ordinarily many tentations to be discouraged, from within and without, which they are to wastle against and employ God under; so much is implied in this exhortation subjoynd to the former doctrine; *Thus saith the Lord of hostes, Let your hands be strong.* 2. It ought to be a notable encouragement to go on in Gods work, when he sends out his messengers constantly to stir up his people to it, and assure them of the successe thereof, and that Gods hand is about it to see it perfected; for, this is an argument: *Ye beare in these dayes these words by the mouth of the Prophets, which were in the day that the foundation of the house of the Lord of hostes was laid, that the Temple might, (or, should) be built:* which last words are a part of that doctrine they

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they had delivered in the by-gone yeares, intimating that the Temple should be built: as a promise on Gods part, and therefore ought to be built, as their duty, having such a promise.

Verf. 10. *For before these dayes there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast, neither was there any peace to him that went out, or came in, because of the affliction: for I set all men every one against his neighbour.*

11. *But now I will not be unto the residue of this people as in the former dayes, saith the LORD of hostes.*

12. *For the seed shall be prosperous: the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew, and I will cause the remnant of this people to possesse all these things.*

This motive is yet further cleared from the blessings that had come upon them since they began to build, according to the predictions of these Prophets when they exhorted them to it: for, whereas before they began the work all went to ruine, there being no successe of endeavours of man or beast, no peace by reason of hostile incursions and civil discords, v. 10: now their condition was changed, according to what the Prophets had foretold, and was to be yet changed to greater felicity, (for v. 11. which is in the Hebrew, *But now I not unto the residue,* &c. doth include both *I am not* for the present, *nor will be* for the future, as in the former dayes.) And particularly he promisseth to blesse the increase of the earth, and give unto them though a remnant, the peaceable enjoyment thereof. And therefore they were to give credit to the same men, promising by the same authority the successe of the work: *Doct. 1.* Particular proofes of the truth of Gods Word in the mouth of his servants, ought to be a special motive to faith and obedience in other things, which they enjoyne and promise in the Lords Name, and by his warrant: for, by this seen accom-

plishment of the Word, they are invited to build and believe the successe. 1. Such as neglect the Lords work, may expect to have all their endeavours for their own things blasted; for, *before these dayes there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast*, that is, no fruit of labours, as Hag. 1. 6. nor any shift whereby a man might earne his bread. 3. When a people do not study to advance the work and honour of God, when they enjoy peace and prosperity, it is righteous with him to vex them with hostile incursions, and deprive them of that which they employ so ill; for, *neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in, because of the affliction, or, enemye*. It seems their ill neighbours made inrodes upon them. 4. As when mens mindes are not united in God, and about his work, they are punished with dissensions among themselves, especially when outward troubles do imbitter them; so civil discord is a judgement wherein Gods hand is especially to be seen, and trembled at; therefore is it subjoynd for, (or and, as a plague added to the former,) *I set all men, every one against his neighbour*, whereof somewhat appeared in their oppressing one another, and their dissensions about that, *Nehem. 5. 1, 2. &c.* 5. Albeit we are not to judge of duty by events, yet it is a double guiltinesse not to be active about it, when the Lord rewards it by visible blessings, and promisetht to do so yet more, for, *Now I am not*, (or, *will not be*) *unto the residue of this people, as in the former d. yes, saith the Lord*: and therefore they are to be strong. 6. Even the mercy of outward plenty, and securing the possession thereof to the Lords people, will be much esteemed of by those who have tasted of want and trial of that kinde, and ought to be taken as an obligation put upon us to employ our selves more for God and his service, however it be little esteemed of by these who enjoy most of it: for such is the encouragement propounded, *v. 12.*

Verf. 13. *And it shall come to passe, that as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah, and house of Israel: so will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing: feare not, but let your hands be strong.*

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A second motive to build the Temple, (containing a further explanation of the promise of his change of dealing) is comprehended in this general, (wherein *Israel* also hath a share,) that the Lord would take away the signes of his displeasure, and so visibly blesse them with prosperity, that as formerly they had been a by-word to all cursers, who wished these they hated to be dealt with as the Jewes were, so they should become a patterne of blessing, that all men should desire these they wished best unto, to be in the Jewes case, which might be a ground of encouragement to them. *Doff.* 1. The Lords severity against his sinful Church is very remarkable, and may, for outward dispensations, speak much of a curse, whatever be in his heart; for, *Ye were a curse among the heathen*, or, an accursed people in all their accounts. 2. The remarkable corrections of the Lords people will in due time end in as remarkable blessings: and the condition of Gods reconciled people, countenanced by him, is such, as none could wish a better to them they wished best unto; for, *As ye were a curse, so will I save* (or, deliver) *you, and ye shall be a blessing.* 3. When the Lord is manifesting kindnesse, by word or work, his people would take heed that they do not undervalue it, by continuing in discouragement, but are to honour him by being strengthened and comforted thereby: and in this especially they are to guard against their owne fearful and fainting hearts, which will make discouragements where there are none: and which being supported, will make that no outward dispensations shall discourage; therefore are they again exhorted, *Fear not, but let your hands be strong.*

Verl. 14. For thus saith the LORD of hostes, As I thought to punish you, when your fathers provoked me to wrath, saith the LORD of hostes, and I repented not:

15. So again have I thought in these dayes to do well to Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah: feare ye not.

All these encouragements, and the truth of the promises holding them out, are yet further confirmed, from the truth

they had found in former threatenings; for, as the Lord had executed threatenings for their sin, and that notwithstanding all their thoughts, that he would revoke his sentence, and not see their last end: so had he now as unchangeable a purpose to blesse them, and to perform these promises, and therefore they were, contrary to all their doubts and feares, to believe, he being as unchangeable in the one, as in the other, and withal a God that delights in mercy. *Doct. 1.* There may be (and many times are) immutable thoughts of love in God, and of doing good to a people, after that he hath, without relenting, brought on sore judgements on them: for, after all that sad lot, *v. 14. I have thought to do well unto Jerusalem*, saith the Lord. 2. It's the ordinary weaknesse and distemper of the Lords people, that they are most ready to doubt that which they are most called to believe, and to believe that for which they have no ground: for, this people could not believe any thing but promises, when God thought to punish them, and therefore it is said, *I intended not*, as they dreamed he would. And now they could apprehend nothing but discouragements when promises are allowed, and they need to be exhorted, *Faare ye not*. 3. The disappointments our misbelieving hearts have had, (whether in execution of promises or threatenings) ought to be an argument for perswading us to believe what is revealed in new exigents: therefore he layeth before them how far judgements had come beyond their expectation, that they might learn not to measure promises by their apprehensions. 4. The Lords afflicted people need not want a confirmation of Gods fidelity in promising, so long as the strokes on them prove his truth in threatening, his striking according to his threatening when they deserved it, is a pledge, and may be a ground of hope, that he will perform his Word of promise when they need it: for, by such an argument doth the Lord confirm these fainters here. See, *Jer. 32. 42.* 5. At the Lord doth not strike his people without picy, but upon iust provocation given, which it concerns him in his glory and respect to them not to passe over. So any good that comes to them, arises freely from his own purpose of love, and that is to be rested on for it: for in the one it is, *I thought to punish you when your fathers provoked me to wrath*; in the other, *So again in these dayes have I thought to do well, &c.*

Verſ. 16. *Theſe are the things that ye ſhall do: Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour, execute the judgement of truth and peace in your gates.*

17. *And let none of you imagine evil in your heart againſt your neighbour, and love no falſe oath, for all theſe are things that I hate, ſaith the LORD.*

The Lord makes further uſe of theſe encouragements to ſtir up this people to ſtreightneſſe and piety in their private converſation: and ſo makes further way for further encouragements, and for the poſitive answer to their queſtion. He tenderly recommends to them (as a Father to his children,) that they would in their carriage toward their neighbour, both in private and in courts of juſtice ſtudy truth without diſſimulation, and to judge righteous judgement in ſuch a way as might tend to peace: and to put on affection which might guard their heart from wiſhing or deviſing evil to their neighbour. And that in reference to God they would not prophane his Name by falſe oaths, all theſe things being an abomination before him.

Dut. 1. It is a ſweet caſe, and ſpeaks much of a bleſſing, when men joine a publick ſpirit with perſonal holineſſe: therefore after the exhortation to build the Temple, this concerning their private converſation is preſſed. *2.* Such as deſire to approve their ſincerity before God, ought in their ſpeeches, profeſſions, or promiſes to their neighbours, to ſtudy truth without diſſimulation or double dealing, and pretending to that which they intend not: *Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour,* 3. In perfect adminiſtration of juſtice care ſhould be had, by ſuch as would approve themſelves to God, that judgement go not forth without exact knowledge of the cauſe, or out of any by-reſpect to perſons, violence of paſſion or affection, or according to mens inclination, being blinded with gifts; but ſingly and according to truth. *Execute the judgement of truth in your gates,* which was the place appointed for courts of judgement, *Ruth 4. 1. 2 Sam. 15. 2.* 3. As truth, ſo alſo peace both private and publick is to be ſtudied after in adminiſtration of juſtice, and care is to be had that judgement be equitable, ſo as

may breed peace, that perverted justice breed not private quarrels, and that by protracting of law-suits, irritations and bitter-
 nesses grow not; *Excuse the judgement of truth and peace.*

4. The Law of God is spiritual, reaching to the inward as well as the outward man, so that an ill course is not sufficiently abandoned, unless we mortifie our love and affection to it: for so is expounded here; *Let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour, and love no false oath.*

5. It is a fearful proph-
 nation of Gods Name, when an oath is taken to assert a falsehood, or in promising of that which men minde not to performe, or wilfully do not perform; this they are dissuaded from, *Love no false oath.* 6. As Gods displeasure and hatred against sin ought to be a sufficient aw-band to keep men from it; so the con-
 sideration thereof is the most cleanly motive to dissuade from sin: therefore is this only argument used here; *For all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord.*

Verf. 18. And the Word of the LORD of hostes came unto me, saying,

19. *Thus saith the LORD of hostes, The fast of the fourth moneth, and the fast of the fifth, and the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladnesse, and chearful feasts: therefore love the truth and peace.*

The Lord having thus reproved, encouraged and exhorted this people, upon occasion of their question concerning their fasting: He gives yet a new commission for further encouragement, and particularly to resolve their question and assure them, that not only that fast, but all the rest of them, (of which see, on ch 7, 1, 2, 3.) should resolve in joy, causes of their sorrow being taken away, and matter of feasting given, which therefore invites them yet to studie their duty. *Doct.*

1. The sorrowful dayes of Gods people will not only have an end, but will resolve in such advantages, as will afford much matter of joy; for, *These fasts shall be unto the house of Judah joy, and gladnesse, and chearful feasts.* 2. The Lores allow-
 ance unto his people, is far beyond any thing they ordinarily propound unto themselves; for, their question was but of
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one fast, his answer of fouré, they only question about leaving it off, he promises to make it end in joy. 3. The more frequent encouragements we get from God, the more are we to minde our duty, at least to grow in love to it, and desire of obedience; for, it is subjoynd: *Therefore love the truth and peace.* By which we may understand, either, 1. Love sincerity and peaceableness in your dealing, as v. 16. Or, 2. Love the truth of Religion, (not doting on your fasts) which only can bring you true peace. Or, 3. So love truth in all debates, as love to peace be joynd with it, yet so as truth be put in the first place, as the only way for attaining sure peace.

Verf. 20. *Thus saith the LORD of hostes, It shall yet come to passe, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities.*

21. *And the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seeke the LORD of hostes, I will go also.*

22. *Yea, many people and strong Nations shall come to seek the LORD of hostes in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.*

To confirm the truth of the preceding promise, and clear how their Fasts should be turned into joy, the Lord subjoynd a new promise of the accession of the Gentiles unto the Church, v. 20. who should mutually exhort and stir up one another to seek God, v. 21. and should be so blessed therein, as that great and potent Nations should come and worship God in his Church, whereof *Jerusalem* was the type, v. 22. *Dost.* 1. It is the Churches safety to learn to understand promises spiritually, and not expect satisfaction to their carnal humours; for, thus doth the Lord clear unto them, that the matter of their joy should be spiritual, in the Gentiles joyning with the Church. 2. Saddest times should not hinder the Church from minding her charter for enlargement, and believing her priviledges to come; for, in her sad times she is called to think on this: *There shall come people, and the inhabitants*

ants of many Cities. 3. Mutual up-stirring to holy duties is an especial meanes to make a growing time and thriving Church; for, *The inhabitants of one City shall go to another, saying, Let us go, &c.* 4. The true errand of real Converts in Religion, is singly to seek God for himself, and his favour and peace, and the special way of testifying and obtaining their desire. and making grace to grow is to be much in prayer: this is twice set down as their work; *Let us go pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of hostes*, v. 21. and again, v. 22. 5. True liveliness in Religion, will admit of no lazinesse, luke-warmnesse, formal indifferency or want of constancy in seeking God, but mens greatest activity will be accounted but a slow pace, and all that as nothing, unlesse it be constant; for, *Let us go speedily or continually*, is their call and invitation one to another. 6. Mutual up-stirring is then most effectual, when every one casts a copy in his own practice of what he would have others to do; for, so is it here, *I will go also*, saith every exhorter. 7. As great and potent people, (and not only the weak and poor) have been and will be brought in to the Church; so the excellencies in Religion being known, may cause men think meanly and nothing of all excellencies beside, if they want it; for, *Many people and strong Nations shall come to seek the Lord*. Kings may be glad to share in the poore and needies allowance from God, *Pf. 72. 10, 11, 12, &c.*

Ver. 23. *Thus saith the LORD of hostes, In those dayes it shall come to passe, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the Nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.*

The Lord cleares further the way of the Gentiles Conversion, and how it should be matter of joy to the Jewes, as being to be done by their Ministry, and as contributing to set out the honour of that Nation, that they enjoyed the true Religion: for, the knowledge of God, spreading forth from amongst the Jewes, and his interest in them being published, innumerable people, (*ten* is put for very many) of all languages shall cleave
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to them, as children or Parents, desiring to be taught by them, and joyne with them, who are so much honoured by enjoying and knowing the true God. This was accomplished, when the Gentiles flocked to the Apostles, and Christian Jewes upon hearing the Law which came out of Zion, and may yet further be verified when the salvation of all Israel shall bring a resurrection from the dead to the Gentiles, Rom. 11. 15. *Doff.*

1. The excellencie of Christ published in the Gospel, and the grace of God co-operating therewith, is effectually able to invite many, and yet none needing feare a disappointment, or not to be satisfied; is able to make people concur in seeking Christ, who in other things were Barbarians one to another, and to make them come willingly, and to be so far from needing compulsion, that they will bear themselves upon him; for, *In these dayes ten men of all languages of the Nations, will take hold of the skirt of a Jew.* 2. Such as are indeed converted and following after Christ, are very sensible of their own wants, and earnest pursuers of all appointed meanes; for, *They take hold of the skirt of a Jew, saying, We will go with you;* as children that cannot go, and know not whither to go without they grip their Parents, so they being sensible of ignorance and inability, shall presse upon the Jewes for teaching, and joyne in the Church where God is to be found. 3. It is the great honour of a people to enjoy the true Religion, and to be instrumental in doing good to others, and such will be honoured of all who know God: for, this is the honour of a Jew, that *his skirt is taken hold of* by the Gentiles, because that *God is with him*, and thus do the Convert Gentiles honour them. 4. As the Jewes had the honour of the first offer of the Gospel, and of having a great hand in planting the first Christian Churches, so should we long for the time, wherein they, who are enemies for our sakes, may yet have God with them, and may cause a reviving from the dead among the Gentiles; for, this prophecie reaching to that time, invites us thus to pray, not only for their sakes, but even for the Gentiles advantage.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

IN this Chapter the Lord doth comfort the Church of the Jewes, and encourage them to go on in the work, by prophesying, 1. Of the calamities that were to come on the enemies bordering about, such as *Syria*, v. 1. *Hamath*, v. 1. *Zidon* and *Tyrus* (whose prudence, strength and riches should not preserve her, v. 2, 3. but should bring her down, v. 4.) and the Philistines, who should be affrighted, destroyed and made desolate, v. 5. and strangers possess their Cities, whereby their pride should be stained, v. 6. and their cruelty repayed, v. 7. — and in the midst of all this the Church should increase, — v. 7. and be protected, v. 8. 2. He prophesieth for their encouragement, of the coming of Christ and his properties, v. 9. and his getting unto himself a Kingdom, v. 10. who is the deliverer of his Church and people, v. 11. who allows them to hope for a rich recompence of their miseries, v. 12. and promiseth that he will strengthen them against all their enemies, v. 13. that he will be their General, and appear for them in fight, v. 14. will give them victory, and satiate them with spoiles, v. 15. (which victory shall set forth Gods glory, and make them honourable, v. 16.) and that he shall give them cause to glorifie him for this, and for the fruitfulness of their land, v. 17.

Verf. 1. **T**He burden of the Word of the LORD in the land of Hadrach, and Damascus shall be the rest thereof: When the eyes of man, as of all the tribes of Israel, shall be toward the LORD.

Hitherto the Prophet hath had Commission, especially to reveal visions and doctrinal instructions to the Church: Now there followes to the end of the book, particular prophecies and pre-

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predictions concerning the time to come, for their use and benefit. And concerning this first prediction of vengeance on several enemies; under these who are named, (as being most notore and known) we are to understand all the enemies of the Church. But there is a difficultie about the time of accomplishing this prediction: for the words in the close of this verse, *when the eyes of man, (as it is in the Original) of all the tribes of Israel shall be toward the Lord,* seem to refer it to the time, when all Israel and the fulnesse of the Gentiles shall be saved, that then much vengeance shall be poured on enemies, and especially on these bordering on Canaan, (who had infested that land, and hindered their quiet possession thereof) that so Israel may possesse it in the extent thereof, according to the charter given them of God. On the other hand, it is clear from histories, that all these cities here mentioned were destroyed under the Grecian Monarchy, betwixt this Prophecie, and the coming of Christ, of which, v. 9. and these words in this verse formerly mentioned, may also be thus read; *For the Lords is the eye of man, and of all the tribes of Israel,* that is, the providence of God, (which is his eye upon man, chap. 3. 9. and 5. 6.) is over all Nations as well as his people, and therefore he will take notice of their faults and punish them, as well as his Israel. In this difficulty it sufficeth us, 1. That the sense of the particular predictions is clear, whatever time we referred them to. 2. That the Lords scope in them is also clear, which is to encourage the present Church, and strengthen her for her duty: for which end it is not unusual for God in one prediction, to point at somewhat near to be accomplished, and yet to intend that but as a pledge of somewhat further off, and so both these may come in under one prediction, somewhat to be shortly seen by the Jewes, and that pointing at somewhat to be done long after. 3. That the sense of both these translations of the close of the verse, concur in Gods executing of vengeance on enemies: for he doth punish them, because his providence is not confined to his Church, but is exerced over all the world, in observing the wayes of all men (as well as of his people) and recompencing them accordingly, and therefore he will not spare them more then his own people; and the time of his doing of it, is, when his people, whom he avengeth, have their eyes and heart toward him. 4. That it is clear and certain there is a time coming, wherein the eyes of the fulnesse of the Gentiles,

and of all *Israel* shall be toward the Lord, *Rom. 11.* at which time the Lords accomplishment will expound many dark promises, concerning *Israels* restitution to their land, and victory over their enemies: for unto this, many things in this and the following chapters seem so clearly to point, that whatever was literally performed to the Jewes, was but a taste of the fulnesse of the prediction: and whatever be done to *Israel* in the Spirit in a spiritual way, yet the prediction in its full and literal sense seems to look another way.

Having premittid this as a necessary Introduction, not on-ly to this part of the chapter, but to the whole ensuing prophe-cie: I shall so go through particulars, as chiefly to gather ge-neral instructions, without relation to particular times, yet not omitting to point at the several passages, which speaks most clearly to *Israels* conversion and restitution. And so, the first place threatened with this burdensom message is, the Kingdom of *Syria*, called the land of *Hadrab*, from the name of some of their idols, (as *Judea* is called *Immannuels* land, *Ila. 8. 8.* So also the *Moabites* are named by their idols, *Jer. 48. 46.*) or from some part in *Syria* called by this name. And particular-ly *Damascus*, (the chief City of *Syria*, *Isa. 7. 8.*) is threat-ened, that this vengeance should dwell on it. *Whence learn,*
 1. The Word of the Lord, how light soever it seem, yet in the end will prove insupportable and crushing to these against whom it speaks bitter things; for, a threatening is, *The burden of the Word of the Lord.* 2. As the Lords providence is universal; so enemies shall not escape his hands in due time; for, the Lord (who hath an eye upon man, and all *Israel*,) hath a burdensom word, *in the land of Hadrab.* 3. As eminent places in a land enjoy most of the mercies, and ordinarily have most accession and greatest share in the sins of the land; so sad judgements ordi-narily afflict them most: therefore *Damascus* the chief City is specially threatened. 4. Gods judgements upon wicked men, and especially enemies to his Church, do not come with a light touch, but they lie sad, and are permanent upon them; for, *Damascus shall be the rest* of this burdensome word. 5. It is a clear evidence of approaching judgement on the wicked, when the Lords people turn unto him, and make their peace with him through Christ, and are kept in humble dependance on him, for expeding them out of their difficulties; for, so do the
 words

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Words hold out as they are in the translation; This shall be when the eyes of man, and of all the tribes of Israel shall be toward the Lord, and is agreeable to other Scriptures, 1 Chron. 20, 12, &c. Psal. 56. 9. and elsewhere: and we are to long for the performance of this to Israel, that it may make way for bringing down of enemies.

Verf. 2. *And Hamath also shall border thereby: Tyrus and Zidon, though it be very wise.*

3. *And Tyrus did build her self a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.*

4. *Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire.*

In the next place *Hamath*, (a countrey lying to the North, betwixt *Judea* and *Syria*, 1 Kings 8. 65. 2 Kings 25. 20, 21.) is threatened, that it shall border by *Syria*, or be next in misery to it: then the judgement is to come along to *Tyrus* and *Zidon*, yet nearer to the land of *Israel*, concerning whom (especially the first,) it is declared, that neither her prudence nor strength, being built on a fortified rock in the sea, nor her riches, which abounded as the vilest commodity, should exempt her from Gods casting her down, overturning her strong holds, and burning them with fire. *Doff.* 1. The Lord hath the execution of judgements wholly at his disposal, to send them against whom he will, and in what measure he will; for, so are we taught here; he disposeth of the burden here and there,

And Hamath also shall border thereby, Tyrus and Zidon, &c.

2. It is a judgement on many people, when God is to plague them, that they are puffed up and secure, because of carnal policy and confidences; for, *Tyrus is very wise*, strongly situate and rich, whereby they think they are secured. 3. It discovers the vanity of all things under the Sun, as to making men happy, that the more is enjoyed of them, they appear the more empty and vile; for, *silver as dust, and fine gold as the mire*, imports not only abundance of them, but that abundance makes men undervalue them. 4. Omnipotence is too strong a party for

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any creature-opposition, and where grounds of carnal confidence are greatest among enemies, the Lord will delight to shew himself great in ruining of them; for, notwithstanding *Tyrus* wisdom, strength and riches; Behold, the Lord will cast her out, (or make an exile of her) and smite her power in the sea, (whether fortifications or ships) and though she dwell in the midst of waters, yet she shall be devoured with fire.

Verf. 5. *Ashkelon* shall see it, and feare, *Gaza* also shall see it, and be very sorrowful, and *Ekron* for her expectation shall be ashamed, and the King shall perish from *Gaza*, and *Ashkelon* shall not be inhabited.

6. And a bastard shall dwell in *Ashdod*, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

7. And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth; but he that remaineth, even he shall be for our God, and he shall be as a Governour in *Judah*, and in *Ekron* as a Jebusite.

The judgement comes further on against the Philistines the inveterate enemies of the Jews: some of whose cities, (comprehending all,) are threatened with terrour at the sight of *Tyrus* fall, in respect they expected that its impregnableness should stop the enemies proceeding: and are further threatened with overturning their State and Government with the casting them out of their countrey, and its being possessed with strangers, or a mixture of vile men, as base, and having as little right to it, as bastards have to an inheritance. Doct. 1. The terrour of God is an ordinary fore-runner of vengeance, and a sore partie to the stoutest; for, *Ashkelon* shall see it and feare. 2. It is a judgement on wicked men, that they get not the right use of calamities on others; for, when they should repent and turne to God, they feare. 3. Whatever it be beside God, that men in an ill time put confidence in, it will produce nothing but feare, sorrow and confusion; for, so was *Tyrus* to the Philistines; they see and feare, and be very sorrowfull, and
their

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their reputation is ashamed. 4. Gods having a controversy against a people, how flourishing soever, is sufficient to overturn their government, dispeople their Countrey, and put it in the possession of forreigners; for, the burdensome word makes that The King (or government, which was managed in every city by a supreme Lord, 1 Sam. 9. 11. and elsewhere) shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited: and a bastard shall dwell in Ashdod.

This judgement on the Philistines is amplified from two effects; that by this calamity, the Lord should revenge and lay their pride, and should punish their cruel and abominable oppression, and preying on his people. Whence learn, 1. Pride and insolency in prosperity, is a certaine presage of ruine, and an evil which God will be seen in bringing down, and stripping the sinners of all wherein they gloried; for by thus ruining them, I will cut off the pride of the Philistines, saith the Lord. 2. As oppression is the fruit of pride, so it is so beastly like and abominable a sinne before the Lord, that he will manifest himselfe eminently, before it be not punished, and hindered of its course; therefore the Lord speaks of it as a beastly sinne, which himselfe will punish; I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abomination from between his teeth. 3. It is a token of very great perverseness in a people; and of very great displeasure from the Lord, when there is no end put to their sinning but by their destruction; for, thus is it with the Philistines, it is by their ruine that their pride is cut off, and their blood taken away.

Unto this threatened judgement on enemies round about, a twofold encouragement to the Church is subjoyned: whereof the first (in the end of v. 7.) is, that she should increase by the ruine of her enemies, the remainders of whom, should be converted, and entered into Covenant with God, and be as carefull of the Churches affaires, and eminent in her, as if they were governours of Judah, and particularly the Philistines and Ekronites should be converted and dwell in the midst of Jerusalem as the Jebusites did of old, who had a Fort in it, till Davids dayes, 2 Sam. 5. pr. as, 2 Chron. 21. 16. Doct. 1. The Church of God is no loser by all the commotions of the world, he mindes her profit and rising, in the ruine of others: for, he will ruine many Nations, if it were but to gather a few precious stones to advance her structure. But be that remembrance

shall be for our God. 2. As these who are reserved in judgments, ought to be drawn to God especially, so preservation may give ground of hope, that God intends much good to them who improve it well: for, *He that remaineth, even he* (how low soever, or, how great an enemy soever he hath been) *shall be for our God.* 3. It is a great token of Gods favour toward afflicted servants, when they are driven to close with him in a Covenant of grace, and when in faith thereof they consecrate themselves to him, to be for him, and at his disposal; for, *He shall be for our God.* 4. These who really turne unto God, and labour to be usefull and comfortable to the Church in their stations, may expect to be truly honourable in the eyes of God and of his people, how many blots soever have been upon them before; for, *He shall be as a governor in Judah*, both for tenderness in duty, and tendency for reparation. 5. Even the most inveterate enemies to the Church may be gained by grace, and coming sincerely, will be welcome; for, such were the Philistines, of whom it is promised, *Ekeron shall be as a Jebusite.* 6. Testimonies of Gods prevailing with, and receiving such as had been enemies and came to him, are not wanting in the Church to encourage the Church to waite on him, and to encourage others to come and make proof of his goodness; for, here there is an instance of Jebusites, who not only dwell long in Jerusalem, but were some of them eminent in piety (as *Araunah*): to be a confirmation of this promise concerning the Philistines: *Ekeron shall be as a Jebusite.*

Verf. 8. *And I will encamp about mine house because of the army, because of him that passeth by, and because of him that returneth: and no oppressor shall passe through them any more: for now have I seen with mine eyes.*

The second ground of encouragement unto the Church, is Gods preservation of her in the midst of calamities upon all round about her. Whereas they might be in danger by incursions of enemies coming again and again upon them, and by armies ranging up and down in the Countreys about, the Lord promiseth to guard his Church (signified by the Temple) that she should not be troubled with these tumults and incursions,

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ons, and particularly that no oppressor should pass through her: and that because he had taken a sufficient proof, and experience had sufficiently shewed the justness and mercy of his people, and their inability to expose themselves, by themselves, out of their misery, and had shewed also what their enemies cruelty was. This being a promise peculiar to the Jews) or *Israel*, however it was this farre verified before Christ, that when enemies came against these Chies before mentioned, or against themselves, or were ranging to and again, through their land betwixt Syria and Egypt, they did not so go through as formerly to burn the Temples, and carry them captives. Yet the promise was not then fully accomplished; for, not only did oppressors go through the land, and make it tributary, yea, and many times profane the very Temple; but in processe of time they were carried into captivity, and the Temple made a desolation: whereas here it is said, *They shall not passe through them any more.* And therefore it seemeth we must expect a more full accomplishment of this to converted *Israel*, in Gods preserving his Church, and their possession of their land in peace to them.

Psalm 124. The Church may have many, and great causes of fear, when God is about to do great things for her; for, she hath armies, and passers by and returners, sometime coming to destroy others, and sometime to infect her selfe, which are all to her.

2. Where the Lord hath his house and Church set up amongst a people, and they look on that as their chief glory, he will protect it, and the Lord for the Churches sake; for, *I will encamp about my house, saith the Lord;* and that is a Lifeguard to all the rest.

3. In God alone there is aliusufficiency to oppose unto all the Churches straits and dangers: and where he undertaketh to protect, no power of enemies will overcome, nor their assiduousnesse onweary him; for, *his encamping* is sufficient to oppose unto an army, and guard him that passeth by and returneth, whether by enemies continually recruiting of their forces after they are again and again beaten, or by daily incursions, which would weary any other man to watch over.

4. God is sufficiently able, when he pleaseth, and setteth it for his peoples good, to turne all their enemies into a snare, and give them peaceable times without molestation from enemies, and continue it so during his pleasure; for he can make and performe such a promise; *No oppressor shall passe through them any more.* Which may quiet their hearts, who stand in need of such

wife, seeing it is not so without his providence who knoweth what is best for his people. 5. When the Lord in afflicting his people, hath given them a prooffe what their sinfulness and the misery that followeth upon it is, and how unable they are to make up any breach betwixt him and them, or to be the better (without his help) of any hard usage; then it is time for mercy to interpose, and make up the controversie, and to prove it selfe as sufficient as the creature is empty; for, so much is imported in this reason expressed after the manner of men, *For now have I seen with mine eyes.* He sees their case, when he gives them an experimental prooffe of it, as *Isa. 57. 18.* 6. Every degree of trouble and enemies cruelty let our upon the Church, as it is marked by God, and is a triall and discovery of what is in their heart, when they have the Church under their power: so it contributes to bring the Church nearer his heart, and to plead for deliverance; for, so much also doth this reason port, *For now I have seen, &c.* as *Exod. 3. 25.* and *3. 7.*

Verf. 9. Rejoyce greatly, O daughter of Zion: shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee, he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an asse, and upon a colt the foale of an asse.

In the second part of the Chapter, the Church is encouraged, and invited to rejoyce (as the poore did in the Jubile, when their lands were to be redeemed) because of the coming of Christ in the flesh (as the Prophecie is expounded, *Mat. 21. 5.*) who is here described from his Kingly Office, and his properties of justice, power to save, and lowlinesse which he openly avowes by riding without state. *Doct. 1.* As Christ is the substance of all the Churches comforts, so especially by his incarnation, and taking on our nature, is the fountaine of our encouragement in him, opened up; for, in this are they to rejoyce: *Rejoyce, shout, behold, thy King cometh.* 2. The encouragements that come through Christ incarnate are not easily discerned, nor rested upon as they ought, even by these who have special interest in them: therefore *Zion* must be called once and again to *rejoyce, shout, and behold.* 3. Christ is a King whosoever he appeare to be in carnall mens eyes, and it is the

Church,

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Churches comfort that he is so, as being he who will rule over her, when she would destroy her selfe, and under whose protection she will be safe, though she seem to be a slave to others, *Rejoyce, thy King cometh.* 4. It is sufficient ground of encouragement unto the Church, that there is hope of Christs coming unto her, albeit she be not in present possession, *shout, thy King cometh,* saith he. 5. It also may encourage her, that she hath a peculiar interest in this King, and that he is at all the paines to make her happy; he is *Jerusalem and Zions King*, and he cometh unto her, *Thy King cometh into thee.* 6. Christ is a King that will do no wrong unto his subjects, but is to be acknowledged as just in all he doth, nor will suffer any to do them wrong, but he will avenge it, and he hath imputed righteousness, whereby to justify all his subjects who flee to him; this is matter of *Zions joy*, he is *just*, which includeth all these. 7. Christ also is a King, whose prerogative it is to save, when and in what exigent he pleaseth; who, wherever he comes by the light of his countenance, he brings salvation with him, and hath purchased salvation to his people, by his saving himselfe out of all that he engaged in for them; for, *he hath salvation.* 8. It sets out much of the glory of Christs Kingdome, and contributes much for the encouragement of his subjects, that he is a lowly and a meek King, who will condescend to the low estate of his people, that he is easie to be intreated, not easily provoked, not a sore quarreller, one to whom there is easie access, and who will deal tenderly with his own; for, he is *lowly or meek.* 9. As Christs Kingdome is spiritual, and having no State like worldly Kings: So doth he prove his lowliness and make it visible to all, to take all scruple out of the heart of the humble, that they may not be deterred from coming to him; this is signified by his solemne entrie into *Jerusalem* without any state, *riding upon an asse, and a colt the foal of an asse*, which posture, whatever dignity was in it of old, (as *Judges* 5. 10. & 10. 4. & 12. 14. 2. Sam. 17. 23. & 19. 26.) yet in the dayes of this Prophecie, and the accomplishment thereof, when great ones followed the customes of Kingdomes about them, it was a symbol of a low condition, especially it being on an asse not as yet accustomed to riding, *Mark* 11. 2.

Verf. 10. And I will cut off the chariot from E-
phraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the bow from E-
phraim, and the chariot from Jerusalem, and the bow from E-
phraim, and the chariot from Jerusalem, and the bow from E-

196. *the horse from Jerusalem: and the
battle-horse shall be cut off, and he shall speak
peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be
from sea even to sea, and from the river, even to the
ends of the earth.*

There is further prophesied concerning the Kingdome of
this King, that God would be so farre from employing Israels
armies to subdue the world unto the Messiah and themselves;
as they dreamed, that on the contrary, as he had cut off all war-
like power, from the Kingdome of Israel, so would he by the
Romans, cut off all visible power, of a Kingdome from Judah
and Jerusalem, for their rejecting of Christ, and to make them
and Israel like. And yet he should not want a Kingdome,
but by the Gospel of peace, would bring in the Gentiles, and
get an universal Kingdome in the world, broken or with addi-
tion to the whole extent of Canaan, which was a type of the
Church, and in their common speech the borders thereof was
put for the uttermost parts of the earth. But more especially it
seems to be a promise of Christs recalling Israel in the latter
dayes to possesse their land, according to the ancient bounds
thereof, to make up the Kingdome with the heathen formerly
mentioned. *Doct. 1.* It is righteous with God, where Christ
is offered and rejected, to make them who will not be a Church
or house to him, nor to be a Kingdome or people; for, *I will
cut off the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-horse shall be cut
off, to wit, when Christ comes, and is not received, but cruci-
fied by them.* 2. A people spared when others are destroyed, and
yet continuing to adde to their provocations, may expect to
partake of their lot who have gone before them, and that their
former exemption will not alwayes endure; for, *Ephraim and
Jerusalem* are here joyned, not that there was any face of that
Kingdome of Israel when Christ came in the flesh, but as Ephraim
had been broken of old, so should the Jewes be afterward;
*I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jeru-
salem.* 3. Whomever God destroys for rejecting Christ, yet
Christ will not want a Kingdome in the world; and particu-
larly, the Gentiles have a charter for being a part of Christs
Kingdome; for, when the Jewes are broken, their power he
will speak peace unto the heathen. 4. As the spiritual weapons

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of Christ's Kingdome, and the only effectual meanes for gaining people unto him; & whatevcr Christian Magistrates ought to do for making way to the right exercise of these weapons;) so are they sufficient of themselves to bear out and prevaile, and carry their point against all opposition. Christ can by preaching the Gospel, and holding out thereby the peace purchased for sinners in his blood, prevaile over all idolatry and power of men, and scale his Kingdome among them: yea and get upon the thrones which Satan possessed; for, *he shall speake peace unto the Heathen, and thereby prevaile.* 5. Christ his charter is to be an universall King, the bounds of whose Kingdome, in reference to the world, or the land of *Canaan*, is of Gods determining, and who will want none of his right, oppose him who will; for, so is peremptorily declared here: *His dominion shall be from sea, even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.*

Verf. 11. *As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water.*

After the description of this King, and the prediction concerning his Kingdome; there is subjoynd a declaration and Prophecie concerning the benefits of his Kingdome, redounding unto the Church of the Jewes. Whereof the first (directed to the daughter of *Zion* or *Jerusalem* which is to be repeated from v. 9.) is, deliverance from their captivity and dispersion, where they were halfe buried, without comfort, as in a dungeon, wanting so much as water to refresh them; which deliverance comes by vertue of the Covenant, which had been sealed by the blood of the sacrifices, typifying the blood of Christ, which doth confirme it indeed, and purchases all the benefits thereof. This the Lord had already done for them in their deliverance from *Babylon*, as a pledge of the future returning of their captivity, after Christs coming, v. 9. and after the calling of the Gentiles, v. 10. and he speaks of this, as a thing past, because of its certainty. **Doct. 1.** The deeper any of the people of God be in trouble, they lie nearer his heart and help; and he would have them look on the comforts of the Kingdome of Christ, and the Covenant, as especially intended for them; therefore

doth he apply the general comforts of Christs Kingdome to the distressed Jewes: *As for thee also.* 1. As the afflictions of the Lords people may be very bitter, and so ordered as they may be trials indeed: so there will be special notice taken of them, when their rods become so insupportable, that there is no subsisting under them; for, he eyes them, when they are prisoners in a pit, wherein is no water, as sometime they may be. 3. God entering in a Covenant with his people, condescends to take in all their outward necessities, and engages to have a care of them in these as well as in things spiritual; and so all their mercies come by Covenant; for, it is by the covenant, that the prisoners are sent forth. 4. The mercies of the Church are not only rich and refreshfull in themselves, and in their Original, that they come through a Covenant of love, but in their purchase that they are bought, and the Covenant concerning them made sure by the blood of the Sonne of God; *By the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners.* 5. The Lord mindes of it forth-coming for his peoples good, when they have broken it on their part; for, though for their perfidioulnesse they were scattered, yet the Covenant stands to bring them back; *Thy Covenant.*

Verf. 12. Turne ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope, even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee:

A second benefit of his Kingdome redounding unto them, and the use of the former, is contained in an exhortation to all those who either then were, or after their rejection of Christ should be dispersed as prisoners, that as they should have hope of restitution, so they would make ready to returne to their land, promising unto them, that they shall be richly made up for all their losses. *Doff. 1.* No strait of the Lords people can be so great, but there is matter and ground of hope in it, which should be cherished, to discover day-light unto us in a dark night; for, they are here prisoners of hope. 2. Hope in straites is to be improven, for strengthening to duty, and will hearten men to the use of meanes whereby the strait may be removed: whereas heartlesnesse layes men idle; for, prisoners of hope are to turne them

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ben to their strong hold. 3. The Church of God, how weak
 oever in her selfe, yet by reason of Gods protection is invincible
 and a safe refuge for tossed people; for, it is a *strong hold*, *turn*
ye to the strong hold. 4. Hope in God setting about duty, will
 never be ashamed, but hath assurance of comfortable success; *for*,
prisoners of hope, are in their duty seconded by a promise.
 5. As the Lord may be intending comfortable things, when in
 the mean time his people are in great straites; so hard times
 will not silence him from promising mercy, and should not hin-
 der our faith to believe it; *for, even to day do I declare.* 6. Af-
 fliction of the Lords people, are in due time richly and doubly
 made up unto them, by their seeing double the misery, that ever
 they suffered; afflicted on their enemies; by rich advantages and
 benefits from their own exercises; by doubling their felicity in
 respect of what they had, when it is for their good; and especi-
 ally in Christ every blessing is double, in it selfe, and in the
 purchase; in what it is, and in its being a pledge of eternal life:
for, I will render double to thee. 7. In making up the afflictions
 of the Church, the Lord hath an especial eye to every one
 in particular, that they have no cause to account themselves or
 their afflictions sleighted; for, whereas before it was in the
 general *prisoners*, now the promise is particular to every one, *I*
will render double to thee.

*Vers. 13. When I have bent Judah for me, filled
 the bowe with Ephraim, and raised up thy sonnes, O
 Zion, against thy sonnes, O Greece, and made thee as
 the sword of a mighty man.*

A third benefit promised unto them, (whereby also the for-
 mer shall be accomplished) is victory over all their enemies
 that shall invade them, which was in part accomplished in the
 conflicts of the Jewes in the dayes of the *Maccabees*, with their
 enemies who were a part of the broken Empire of *Assyria*, or the
Grecians; but considering that *Ephraim* is mentioned as well
 as *Judah*; it seems to reach further, to victories to be attained
 both by *Judah*, and *Ephraim*, or the ten tribes, against their ene-
 mies, who it may be shall be inhabitants of *Greece*, or the *Turk*.
 This promise is branched out, for more distinct confirmation,
 in several branches. As first, God employing them, as his bowe,
 arrowes

arrows and sword, and stirring them up against their enemies, shall make them strong. *Doct. 1.* The reason of courage and success, or the want of them, is not in the creature, but comes from God, who employeth and layeth by, raiseth up, and casts down, and according as he changes, the creature proves strong or weak; for, the fountaine of the Churches victory, is Gods making Zion his bended bowe, Ephraim his arrowes to shoo, and his raising up Zions sonnes against Greece. 2. The Church of God is too sore a party for any opposite, in respect of that though she be laid by, she will be employed again, and be enabled to fall to afresh, after she hath been overcome, and when God employes her she is invincible; for, though Ephraim and Zion were laid by, yet again God will bend Judah for him, &c. and in his hand they shall be as the sword of a mighty man, or

Vers. 14. And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his arrow shall go forth as the lightning: and the Lord GOD shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwindes of the South.

A second branch of the promise is, God shall be General in their enterprises, shall protect them as of old he did by the cloud, *Exod. 14. 19.* shall animate them as by a trumpet blown, and fight from Heaven with thunder and lightning, and scatter and overturne all as whirlewindes do in the deserts to the South of Judah: or, as when he overthrew Egypt at the Red-sea, *Ps. 77. 16, 17, 18. Exod. 15. 10. Doct. 1.* The Churches defence and victory is of God, who is chiefe in her enterprises against her enemies, and delights to be seen on her behalfe, encouraging her and making her victorious; for, *The Lord shall be seen over them, &c.* 2. The Church and her wel-being is so precious in Gods sight, that he will do strange things ere she be not delivered; and he brings her to extremities, that her help may be seen to be from Heaven; for, *His arrow shall go forth as lightning: and he shall go forth with whirlwindes of the South.*

Vers. 15. The LORD of hostes shall defend them,
and

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*and they shall devour, and subdue with sling-stones;
and they shall drink and make a noise, as through wine;
and they shall be filled like bowles, and as the corners
of the Altar.*

A third branch of the promise is, God, going forth for them, shall not only defend them, but give them victory, and make them devour and subdue their enemies who are as bales as stones cast out of a sling, (or, shall overcome them, though they had but sling-stones to fight with, as David had when he came against Goliath) and shall make it a compleat victory, and full execution, so that their swords shall be satiate with blood and slaughter, as the bowles or basins of the Temple, and corners of the Altar, were with the blood of sacrifices: and themselves satisfied abundantly with the victory, and spoiles, to make them keep feasts and be merry, if not also to offer praise to God, which is spoken of in rearmes taken from the ceremonial law, wherein they filled the bowles with the blood of sacrifices. Of these bowles, or basins, of the Altar, See 1 King. 7. 50. 2 Chron. 4. 20. Numb. 3. 12. 34. Basins were made use of by Moses to keep the blood in, till it were sprinkled, Exod. 24. 5, 6, 7. and it seems they carried the blood in basins to the Altar, to sprinkle it upon the horns thereof, and pour out the rest at the bottom of it; as Levit. 4. 30. and elsewhere. Doct. 1. The Lord can put his people in a safe condition in the midst of greatest dangers; *The Lord of hostes shall defend them.* 2. When enemies break loose upon the Church, it portends that that controversie shall end in their ruine; for, the defended Church shall devour and subdue. 3. As all wicked men are abominable and bales in Gods sight, so especially these who would rise upon the Churches ruines shall be contemptible, and brought down with ignominy; thus both the readings come to one purpose, the Church shall subdue the sling-stones, or, subdue with sling-stones, their ease overthrowing them, as with sling-stones, shall declare that they are bales, as sling-stones cast out upon the ground, in Gods sight. 4. When the Lord pleads the cause of his people, he will not only give such proof of himselfe as may curb enemies, but such as may fully satisfy his people, and comfort and refresh their spirits, and make them praise him: This is signified by this satiety of blood and spoile promised to make them

them as joyes, as men refreshed with wine and feasts; *They shall drink and make a noise as through wine, and they shall be filled like bowels, and as the corners of the Altar.*

Verse 16. *And the LORD their God shall save them in that day, as the flock of his people, for they shall be as the stones of a crown lifted up, as an Ensign upon his land.*

The victory is further amplified from Gods glory, and tender mercy, shining in his marvellous helping of their infirmity, as if a shepherd pulled a sheep out of the wolves jaws; and from the effects of the victory, that they should be exalted in their own land, as the precious stones of a crown, when their enemies should lie on the ground as stones cast out of a sling, and they should be set up as a banner or monument of Gods victory. *Deut. 33.* Every new look of Gods mercies toward his people, will discover more and more in them to refresh their hearts; for, here at every new repetition there is more to say. 1. That which is chiefly remarkable and refreshful in the Churches deliverance, is the seeing of the glorious power of God, his fidelity and tender mercy toward them shining in it: as here, *The Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of his people:* his doing of it as being their Confederate God, and tender shepherd, looking on all the rest of the world, as goats, and swine, and boares, commends it to them. 3. These in whose deliverance God will be most seen, are in themselves most encompassed with infirmities, and convinced of inability, that Gods glory may be the more visible; for, they are as a flock exposed to wolves, *in that day that he saves them.* 4. However the Lords people may sometimes be in a contemptible-like condition, yet in due time their preciousness in Gods eyes shall be visible, and they shall be such monuments of his power and love, as may invite others to joyne with them; for, *They shall be as the stones of a Crown lifted up, as an Ensign upon his land.*

Verf.

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Verſ. 17. *For how great is his goodneſſe, and how great is his beauty! corne ſhall make the young men chearful, and new wine the maids.*

A fourth benefit promiſed unto *Iſrael* through Chriſt, is, the making of their land fruitful in ſuch meaſure of corne and wine, as ſhould make them full of vigour and mirth, and that not only the aged who moſt need it, but even the younger ſort for their further pleaſure and reſreſhment; the conſideration of all which benefits tends to the commendation of Gods goodneſſe and excellencie, which as it is the fountain of them all, ſo it is here admired at. *Doct.* 1. As one bleſſing from God, will ſtill need and call for another, ſo one bleſſing from him follows upon another, he will provide for theſe whom he preſerves, and will answer all their neceſſities; and give them occaſion to reade his love, even in the fruits of their ground, and daily bread; for, after victory *corne and new wine* is promiſed to maintain the Conquerours. 2. As it pleaſeth the Lord ſometime to deal liberally with his Church in outward favours; ſo at all times when he is kinde, it becomes his people to be encouraged and ſtudie chearfulneſſe, whereby to commend his dealing; for, *Corne ſhall make the young men chearful, and new wine the maids.* 3. As Gods free love and goodneſſe is the fountain of all his peoples mercy; ſo he will in due time (whatever hard thoughts his people have of him,) get a commendation from them as good and doing good: *For how great is his goodneſſe!* 4. Gods goodneſſe ſeen in his preſent dealing, ought alſo to commend the beauty of all his by-paſt adminiſtrations, as admirably carried on to ſuch a cloſe; and ſhould make us rebuke our ſelves for judging otherwiſe at any time, and ought to commend his own beauty and comelineſſe to our hearts, that we may embrace himſelf as a portion, without reſting on any particular benefit: For, *how great is his beauty!* is ſubjoynd to the former. 5. The Lords goodneſſe and excellency, infinitely ſurpaſſeth the reach of creatures capacity, and may be adored and admired, but cannot be comprehended or fathomed; and our commending and declaring of it is beſt performed, when we ſet it moſt above the reach of our ability; ſo much doth this way of admiration import: *How great is his goodneſſe, and how great is his beauty!*

CHAP. X.

IN this Chapter we have a continuation of the former Sermon, wherein, 1. He directs *Israel* to employ God for the supply of their necessities, v. 1. and not idols who do but deceive, as their fathers had found in Gods just displeasure at their sins, v. 2, 3. whereas God hath given proof of his love and ability to save, to encourage them to seek him, v. 3. 2. He prosecutes the former prophecies, concerning *Israel*'s restitution and victories, promising to fit them with all necessaries for their own defence, and for attaining victory, v. 4. to strengthen them to subdue their enemies, v. 5. to recollect scattered *Israel*, and joyne them with *Judah*, and restore them fully, v. 6. to strengthen those of *Israel* particularly, and fill them and their posterity with consolations, v. 7. and he confirmeth more especially that promise of restoring *Israel*, shewing that he will do it easily with an hiss, and make them increase as formerly, v. 8, that he will preserve them in their scattering, as seed in the ground, till the time of their Conversion and restitution, v. 9. And that he will remove difficulties in their way, arising from the power of enemies, or other impediments, v. 10, 11. unto all which is intjoynd a prediction of their being encouraged by all these dispensations, to be an holy people, v. 12.

Verse 1. *A* *Sk ye of the LORD rain in the time of the latter raine, so the LORD shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of raine, to every one grasse in the field.*

This part of the Chapter depends upon the close of the former, wherein, having promised plenty, direction is here given how to obtain it, to wit by employing God to send raine, to bring the fruit to maturity, with a promise that God should send bright clouds, (or lightnings a forerunner of raine) which will poure out themselves in shewres, to cause plenty for them

CHAPTER. Prophecies of ZECCHARIAH. 139

them and their beasts. *Doct.* 1. When the Lord purposeth much mercy to his people, yet he will be employed, and put to it by their prayers, to do it for them, that they may see the more of his love in it, and acknowledge him for it; for, after the promise of plenty *ch. 9. 17. Ask ye of the Lord raine, &c.* saith he. 2. Notwithstanding the established course of nature, yet God reserves the disposing of all Providences in his own hand: and will evidence his especially in his way to his own Church; for, albeit God hath sealed a course of former and latter raine, yet they are to ask it of God, and *Canaan* was a land which especially depended on the dew and raine of heaven, *Deut. 11. 17, 12.* 3. Needy man calls for many things to supply his necessities, and many things concur to serve him, which only God is powerful to supply; however he be much neglected: for, if aile man could be ruined by the very clouds their denying their influence, and they at Gods direction, (who only can create and direct them) weary themselves to water the earth for mans good; *Ask ye of the Lord raine, so the Lord will make bright clouds, &c.* 4. Such as are necessitated to employ God for every thing, shall finde their labour not to be in vaine, having not only Gods call to employ him, but his promise to be answered in their strait, in so far as is good; *Ask ye of the Lord raine in the time of the latter raine, so the Lord shall give shewres of raine.* 5. The Lord hath a respect to every one that seeks him, and to every one of the meanest necessities of every one that seek him; for, to an asking people he will give to every one the grasse of the field, to supply their very beasts necessities, much more their own, under that general including all the fruits of the field, fit for man and beast.

Vers. 2. For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams, they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd.

Unto this rebellion and employ God, is subjoyned a dissolution from asking foolish counsels to supply their necessities, and

and particularly, that they forsake not the true God, and follow Idols, Astrologers, and vain dreamers, reasons whereof are taken; partly from the emptinesse of these meanes in all ages, idols revealing nothing to be trusted in, diviners being themselves deluded, could tell no better then they saw, their dreams being false for matter, contrary to the Word, and proving false in the end, and so they proved false comforters: partly from the experience of their fathers, who following these courses, were sent into captivity as a flock without a shepherd, wanting Gods care, and being misled by their Rulers. *Doff.*

1. When the Lord seeks his people to renounce all other confidences, and only employ and depend on him, he is seeking their real good and happinesse in it, and to lead them from their own ruine; for, so he declares here, *Ask ye of the Lord, and he will give shewres*; but employ idols, *and the idols have spoken vanity.* &c. and this is his reason why he exhorts them to seek him only, *Ask ye of the Lord rain, for the idols have spoken vanity.*

2. Whoever renounce trust in the Lord, and the way of his service, and embrace false religions or wayes, in hope of successe and prosperity, will meet with miserable disappointment: and faire promises of comfort that way, will in performance prove emptinesse and falshood; for, so it is here, *Vanity, lies, false-hood, and comforting in vaine,* is the best that can be expected of *idols and diviners.*

3. Experience of the fruit of sinful wayes, ought to make fooles wise, and it is a double sin to fall over again in the sin, for which we have felt affliction our selves, or seen others smart: therefore doth he warne them from their fathers experience, who essayed these sinful wayes.

4. Renouncing of God, and cleaving unto idols, though it may seem to be a cause of prosperity, (as *Jer. 44. 17.*) yet it will draw on captivity, desolation, and sore troubles; for, *therefore they went away as a flock,* scattered here and there, as a flock before the Wolfe.

5. Whatever people may think in their prosperity, yet their adversity will discover how sad it is to cast themselves out of Gods protection, and to have followed such idols as failed them in their strait, and how sad to have wanted faithful Rulers, to do their duty for keeping them right: both these may be included in this, *They were troubled because there was no shepherd.* They found the fruit of wicked Rulers Government, when they came into captivity, and what a plague it was to be left to their idols, and without Gods care, as a flock wanting a

shep-

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Verf. 3. *Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hostes hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battel.*

In the first part of this verse, the Lord clears some more of his minde in that stroak on their fathers, for their childrens use, to wit, that in their captivity, his anger had been against the wicked goats among them, and especially their wicked Rulers both in Church and State, who had been goats for insolencie, *Ezech. 34. 17.* rather then shepherds, and not against any that sought him amongst them: and therefore they would take heed, lest he still punish such, and so be stirred up to depend on him. *Whence learn,* 1. The right understanding of Gods sad dispensations against his people, is a lesson of his own teaching: therefore himself expounds it here. 2. The outward stroak is not all to be looked to, for right use-making of afflictions, but especially what is the controversie, and whom God is angry at: for, so is here cleared, *My anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats.* 3. When God punisheth his Church and people, however stroaks and dispensations may be distributed, yet his special quarrel is against the wicked and ungodly, and these who have had greatest hand in the provocation, and particularly wicked Rulers, are the chief but of his displeasure; for, *Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats.*

In the latter part of the verse, the Lord confirms that his quarrel was especially against the wicked, and their perverse Rulers; for, however he had sent his people into captivity, to cut off such a corrupt crew, yet he had not cast them off, but had visited, (and would yet visit) them in their afflictions, as a shepherd doth his flock, and would employ and govern them, in defending themselves against their enemies, as a Rider doth his horse. And so gives another reason, encouraging them to employ God only, considering what he had done and would do for them. *Whence learn,* 1. The Lord will in due time give proof, that whatever deluges of trouble he let loose upon the Church, because of the iniquities that are therein, yet that he

hath not cast off his relation and affection to her, but will, when his work, and her trial are perfected, own her in her lowest estate, and deliver her; this is given as a confirmation of what he had said; *For the Lord of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah.* 2. Gods relation to his people, and his employing of them, is sufficient to make nothing to be somewhat; for, *He makes them as his goodly horse in the battel.* 3. God hath, and doth from day to day, let forth such proofes of himself unto his people, as may sufficiently convince them of the advantages of seeking to him only; this is a reason for employing God, and not idols; *For the Lord of hostes hath visited, &c.*

Vers. 4. *Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the naile, out of him the battel-bowe, out of him every oppressor together.*

To clear this of Gods change of dealing, the Lord prosecutes the former prophecy, concerning his mercies toward *Judah & Israel*, holding forth many promises and confirmations thereof concerning their victories, conversion and restitution, of which whatever performance the Jewes had before Christ, or *Israel* after the Spirit gets under Christ in a spiritual way, yet they relate further to the Conversion of all *Israel*.

The first promise is, that albeit they should be exposed to injuries, yet God should furnish them with all necessities for their own establishment, and prevailing over their enemies: they should be furnished with Governours as corner-stones, to keep the building firme and in frame, and compleat officers, as a nail fastening timber, or to hold all vessels, *Is. 22. 23.* & with furniture for war, and ability to prevail and make their enemies tributary. *DoE.* 1. Government and order among the people of God is so necessary, as a corner-stone in a building, and a naile in a timber-frame; that the granting thereof by God is a great mercy, and a pledge of his turning in favour to them; for, *Out of him came forth the corner and the naile*, is a proofe of his love. 2. When God sees it good for his people, he can easily enable them to be Conquerours, and bring them in subjection who had been their oppressors; for, *Out of him came the battel-bowe,*
and

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and every oppressour, (or, exaltour of tribute, as the word signifieth) together.

Vers. 5. *And they shall be as mighty men which tread down their enemies in the mire of the streets in the battle, and they shall fight because the LORD is with them, and the riders on horses shall be confounded.*

The second promise explains further their power to prevail over their enemies; that they should be strong as giants, to tread down their enemies, and even to shame and put to flight horsemen, though not by their own strength. *Doff.* 1. There is no power nor might can prevail against the Church supported by God, but when disadvantages are greatest, victory shall be most remarkable: for, *They shall be as mighty men to tread down their enemies as mire, and confound riders on horses.* 2. The strength whereby the Church is enabled to beare out and wrastle with difficulties, is much and frequently to be observed and remarked; therefore is it again held out in the promise. 3. As the Churches strength to go through, is not her own, so it is necessary that God be much exalted and acknowledged for it, when she hath it; this is held forth for our use, *They shall fight because the Lord is with them*, reconciled and in Covenant with them, and assisting them in that enterprise.

Vers. 6. *And I will strengthen the house of Judah, and I will save the house of Joseph, and I will bring them again to place them; for I have mercy upon them: and they shall be as though I had not cast them off: for I am the LORD their God, and will beare them.*

The third promise is, that as he will strengthen Judah, so he will convert and assert the ten tribes out of trouble, and so joyne them with Judah, and bring them again not only to the

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Church;

Church, (which is imported in their being saved,) but (as appears) to their own land: and restore them to his favours, and take away the signes of his anger as if they had never been rejected. The causes whereof are his mercy, and the constancy of his Covenant, turning them to seek him, and hearing them when they seek. *Doff.* 1. It is a point of truth seriously to be believed by Gods afflicted people, that he can, and in due time, will not only strengthen them to endure their lot, but enable them to recover their wonted power and ability, after they have been exhausted with many calamities; therefore is the promise so oft repeated; *I will strengthen the house of Judah.* 2. These who belong unto the Lord and his Covenant, though they may be long cast off, and in a lost condition, for trouble and captivity; yet God will seek them out, bring them again to himself, and set them free from all troubles: of this, his dealing with the ten tribes is a special instance, whose right to the Covenant is unalterable by any temporal rejection, *Rom. 11. 28, 29. I will save the house of Joseph.* 3. When God turns his people to him, not only doth his favour shine upon them, but their priviledges lost through sin, are restored unto them; according to the tenour of his Covenant made with them; for, the house of Joseph being saved, *I will bring them again to place them,* the promise made concerning their land (as appears this should be understood) is forth-coming when they come to God. 4. Tender mercie in God will bring about good things to his people, where there is no other probability thereof, and it is an argument sufficient to move him to perform his promises to them, that in so doing he will magnifie his own mercy; this is the reason of the promise, *For I have mercy upon them.* 5. A people turning unto God, however they have sustained sad calamities, and such marks of his displeasure, as it would seem, should leave a perpetual print behind them; yet they may expect that God can fully restore deplorable conditions, and is willing to do it in outward things, in so far as is for their good; whereof his promise to *Israel* is an instance, *They shall be as if I had not cast them off:* and holds alwayes true in spiritual mercies, that upon repentance and fleeing to Christ, the sinner is in due time restored to Gods favour, as if he had not hid his face from him. 6. Gods entering in Covenant with his people, is a bond which stands firme, notwithstanding many temporal sad lots, and will be forth-coming for the Con-

federate,

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federate, after it hath seemed to be made void for a long time; this is another argument, why the Lord will restore *Israel*, even that he may give a proof of the constancy of his Covenant, *For I am the Lord their God.* 7. As it is a sweet fruit of Gods keeping Covenant, when he brings back his people from their wandering to seek him and call upon him: so the Covenant assures the Suppliant of getting audience; this followes on his being their God, *I will heare them*, which presupposeth that he will convert them to pray to him.

Verf. 7. *And they of Ephraim shall be like a mighty man, and their heart shall rejoyce as through wine: yea, their children shall see it, and be glad, their heart shall rejoyce in the LORD.*

The fourth promise is directed especially to the ten tribes, that they shall also be made giants in the common cause of the Jewish Church, that they shall be filled with consolation as with wine, and that their children who succeed them shall enjoy the same mercies, and shall rejoyce in God, and follow the Christian Religion of their Progenitors. *Doff.* 1. In a time of love, the Lord hath a special respect unto these who have tasted deepest of trouble; and whose condition seems most desperate, that they may be assured of his good will, and not come behinde with any; therefore *Ephraim* or the ten tribes get the promises repeated, and the same with what was given to *Judah*, v. 5. *And Ephraim shall be like a mighty man.* 2. The Lords appearing for his people will change their condition beyond any thing that their case in probability could promise: for, broken and undone *Ephraim*, being assisted of God, *shall be like a mighty man.* 3. Albeit the consolations of Gods people may oft-times be under the clod, yet when he returns unto them, he allowes comfort upon them, which is able to refresh and chear up their heart, as if they had the choice of outward delights, and it is Gods work to apply these consolations effectually; for, *Their heart shall rejoyce as through wine*, saith he, undertaking to give matter of comfort, and to make it effectual. 4. The continuance of the Church from generation to generation, and the mercies of posterity, are matter of refreshment.

ment to the present generation, as if it were done to themselves; for, this is a promise to converted *Israel*, and an addition to their own mercy; *Yea, their children shall see it and be glad*, or, they shall partake of the same mercies to make them rejoyce. 5. As the Lord will have a Church in every generation, and particularly a Church of Jewes and Israelites after their Conversion, till his second coming; so the Lord hath reserved for every generation their own peculiar mercies, which may refresh them; *Their children shall see it*, (to wit, Gods mercy, and the renewed performance of these promises) *and be glad*. 6. Right joy in the Church ought not only to arise upon spiritual grounds, but to be managed and expressed spiritually, so as the Lord alone, and her interest in him, and not any outward favour, nor any spiritual and good thing as it is an habit in her, ought to be the matter of her gloriation; therefore is it added, *Their heart shall rejoyce in the Lord*.

Verf. 8. I will blisse for them, and gather them, for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased.

These promises in regard they were incredible, and many difficulties stood in the way of performance, are amplified and confirmed, and every difficulty taken out of the way by new promises. And first in general, he assures them that he can and will as easily gather them, as a shepherd gathers his flock with an hisse, and gives a reason of his gathering them; not so much because he had given that Nation of old proofes of his power, in temporal deliverances, (though that be true also, and was a pledge of good to them) as because of the price paid for the Elect among them: and further, he enlarges the promise, that being returned and restored, he will make them to increase as of old. *Doct. 1.* Difficulties in the way of a thing promised of God, ought not to drive us to doubt of performance; God who makes the promise, undertaking to see to, and come over all difficulties; and it becoms both the power, wisdom, and love of God toward his people, to have difficulties lying in the way of promises made to them, that he may be exalted, in making opposition ineffectual. And in particular, no impossibility ought to make us question the mercies promised unto all *Israel*,
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since God undertakes to performe them; for, to this scope do all these confirmations of the promises tend. 2. Such is the power and wisdom of God, that what seemes not only difficult, but impossible, he can, and (having promised it) will not only do it, but do it most easily, and without any trouble; for, if he but *hisse for them, he will gather them*. 3. Such as Christ hath redeemed and paid a price to justice for, as they are certainly known to him, so they cannot perish, but will in due time be brought to Christ and saved, whatever difficulty seem to be in the way; for, it is said, that for the redeemed's sake; (which Christ declares there are) *Israel must be converted, and gathered, For I have redeemed them*. 4. Christ's redeemed ones are not only blessed themselves, but are great blessings to the visible Church and Nation to which they belong; for, it is for the redeemed and elects sake, that the whole Nation of *Israel* is brought to the Christian Religion, *I will gather them, for I have redeemed them*. 5. The gracious purposes of Gods heart toward his people are not soon told nor conceived; but as the fountaine is infinite, so are his outlettings, according to their capacity: Therefore at the repetition of the promise, there is a new addition to it; *They shall increase as they have increased*. 6. There is no work that God hath done for his people, but he can do the like again, and the best times that the Church hath had can be repeated again, and get a parallel, when it is for her good; for, here a proo'e of this is promised to *Israel*. *They shall increase as they have increased*.

Verf. 9. *And I will sowe them among the people, and they shall remember me in farre countreys, and they shall live with their children, and turne again.*

Secondly, whereas their scattering among the Nations might be looked on as a great difficulty; the Lord promiseth to turn that into a sowing of them among the Nations and in remote parts, partly so keeping them as winter-seed in the ground till the spring-time of their conversion and restitution; and partly, making them seed to bring in an increase of the fullness of the Gentiles at their conversion, as their Synagogues were a special meanes of publishing the Gospel at first to the Gentiles. And

further the Lord promiset, that their scattering should not hinder their conversion; for, while they are scattered, the vail shall be taken away, and they shall remember the Lord, and they and their children being preserved, shall returne to God, and (as appears, it being opposed to their being scattered in faire Countreys) to their own land. *Dof. 1.* There is no hard lot lying on the people of God, nor difficulty lying in the way of their mercy, but God cannot only remove it, but turne it in a blessing; so doth the Lord promise he will order *Israels* scattering. *2.* As the preservation of *Israel* in their wandering or lost condition, in order to their future conversion is a great mercy unto them, whatever it seem for present: so the mercy of their scattering will further appear, when the Lord shall make their being converted, as seed to bring in much increase of the Gentiles with them unto the Lord; this is imported in this promise, *I will sowe them among the people.* *3.* As the first thing that the Lords people get and are to seek of him, is conversion and reconciliation to himselfe, upon which every good thing followes: so mercy and a purpose of love will seek out, and finde these it is sent to, notwithstanding all disadvantages; for, so is imported in that *Israel* is converted, even in their exile and scattering, and before any other proof of favour, *They shall remember me in faire countreys.* True conversion unto God, not only sets him up high in the heart, and makes him chief in the desires, and stretches out the soul for such further enjoyments of him as he hath promised; but will lead the soul back to be sensible of its prejudice by being formerly deprived of God; *They shall remember me,* saith the Lord, that is, call to minde what faire priviledges they have been deprived of through their infidelity, and being now scattered, shall long to enjoy the wonted proofes of Gods love. A forme of speech which is made use of also to expresse their exercise under the captivity of *Babylon*, *Isa. 26. 8.* *4.* Whatever difficulties converted *Israel* may be assaulted with, yet the Lord shall preserve them, and their families, in the midst of all dangers, till he restore them and satisfie their longing desires; for, when they remember the Lord, *They shall live with the Lord, and turn again.*

Verf. 10. *I will bring them again also out of the Land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria, and I will*

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will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, and place shall not be found for them.

Thirdly, whereas the power of great enemies on all hands, might appear to be a great difficulty; the Lord promiset^h to deliver them even from the strongest, as of old he did from *Egypt*, and now of late (as some of them who were about the work in *Zechariah's* time had seen) from *Babel* and *Assyria*; and that he should bring them back in so great numbers, as to possesse the outmost coasts of their land, (as *Gilead* and *Lebanon* were,) all which should be too little to containe them. Doct. 1. No opposition or power of men shall be able to frustrate or hinder Gods purposes of love toward his Church, but that, either by faire meanes, stirring them up to do his work (as he did with *Cyrus*) or by foule meanes, crushing their opposition, (as he proved on *Egypt*;) he will gaine his point: of this the Lord hath given proofes of old, as pledges to his Church in all ages, and particularly to his *Israel*: *I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria.* 2. Albeit the Lords people who have interest in him, may be farre scattered in all the corners of the earth, yet he will want none of them, but will seek and finde them in all quarters; for, though they be in *Egypt* on the South, and *Assyria* on the North-hand, yet *he will bring them again, and gather them.* 3. Whatever decay the people of God may be threatened with through much affliction, yet God can make them wonderfully to increase, and be more in number at their delivery, then they were before their stroake; This is to be verified in *Israel*, whom the ancient bounds of their land shall hardly containe when they are converted to God: *I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, and place shall not be found for them.*

Vers. 11. *And he shall passe thorow the Sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the Sea, and all the deeps of the river shall drie up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart away.*

Fourthly, whereas there might be many other impediments
in

in the way of their return, joyned with the power of enemies, to oppose them, or keep them captives, (as Egypt and the Babylonish or Assyrian Empire did,) the Lord promiseth to appear as when he brought his people out of Egypt to Canaan, and dried up Seas and rivers; and to deal with enemies as when he brought down the pride of Sennacherib and Belshazzar, and when he drowned Pharaoh and the power of Egypt's Kingdome.

Doct. 1. However difficulty upon difficulty may start up to oppose the Churches happinesse, yet the Lord is sufficient to do all his pleasure, and to make his way and his peoples the more conspicuous, that there be difficulty in it; for, *He will passe through Seas, and drie up rivers, &c.*

2. Whatever opposition is laid in Gods way, will not prove an hindervance to him, but brings trouble to it selfe for its attempt; this was proved on the Sea, which he passed through with affliction (or. trouble, alluding to the trouble of the Red-sea, Ps. 114. 3.) and smote the waves of the Sea, and promises to make good the like on all opposition.

3. The Lord will not stand in delivering his people, to overturn the very course of nature, to crush mens chief excellencies, and whatever else they are proud of, yea and to overturn Kingdomes, ere his people be not happy; for, he will drie up Seas and rivers, *And the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the scepter of Egypt shall depart away.*

Verf. 12. And I will strengthen them in the LORD, and they shall walk up and down in his Name, saith the LORD.

This Prophecie is closed with a promise, concerning their way and carriage for whom the Lord doth all this, that they shall be encouraged and strengthened to be an holy people, and to persevere in faith and obedience, which is to be understood of the elect and truly godly among them, who yet at that time will be very many.

Doct. 1. When the Lord hath done greatest things for his people, it is yet a new gift to give them the use thereof, to encourage and strengthen them thereby; for, it is a new promise, *I will strengthen them.*

2. As God can easily encourage the most feeble and faint-hearted, so their sure grip of it is to have it laid up in God for them, and by faith and dependance draw it forth as there is need, *I will strengthen them in the*

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the Lord, saith he. 3. Encouragement in God is only well improven when it is made use of to strengthen unto holinesse and perseverance, which is the only sweet fruit of all mercies, rendering them comfortable to the receiver, when he is led nearer God by them; *I will strengthen them, and they shall walk up and down*, or, *incessantly walk*, to wit, in their duty. 4. Holinesse is then rightly set about, when we are constantly in it, when we adhere close to the rule, when by faith we draw furniture out of God, and aime at his glory, and give him the glory of all our performances: for so much is imported here, *They shall incessantly walk in his Name.* His Name imports what he hath revealed of himselfe for directing our way, and for us to place our confidence in, and his Name revealing himselfe, is his glory, which every one by walking holily and confidently, ought to study to make more conspicuous. 5. The Lord needs not be hindered to shew himselfe gracious, by the unworthinesse and unholinesse of his people, but when he is about to do them good, he can be surer to himselfe, that the fruit thereof shall be forth-coming to his glory, and can make them he doth much for, to be such a people as his dealing toward them obliges them to be; therefore, after all the former promises, the Lord himselfe undertakes to make them holy; *They shall walk up and down in his Name.* 6. The sweet comfort and refreshment of the promises will only be felt by these who dwell much on the study of God the promise-maker, and consider how all-sufficient he is, and how worthy to be credited for the performance of what he promiseth; Therefore doth he subscribe his Name to all this Prophecie, saith Jehovah.

CHAP. XI.

IN this Chapter the former comfortable promises are, upon wise grounds, seasoned with a sad denunciation of the desolation of the land, and destruction of the City and people of the Jewes, by the *Romanes*, v. 1. 2. 3. which is amplified from the causes procuring the same, to wit, their horrid ingratitude in rejecting of Christ; who being appointed of the Father to be the shepherd of that people, during the time of Gods patience, the calamity

calamity yet going on, v. 4, 5, 6. and undertaking and executing that charge so as might reclaim them, v. 7, 8. — yet they ingrately prove worse; for which they are threatened with his displeasure, v. — 8. and with depriving them of the benefit of his Government and care, v. 9, 10, 11. — wherein the godly should observe his hand and justice, v. — 11. and further to testify their ingratitude, they not only reject, but also crucifie Christ, thinking him worth no more then a small summe which might betray him to the death, v. 12, 13. for which they are further threatened with a totall rejection from his care, v. 14. and a giving them up to wicked Rulers in Church and State, v. 15, 16. who should come to ruine, and the people and Nation with them, v. 17.

Verf. 1. **O** Pen thy doores, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy Cedars.

After all the former promises, the Lord subjoynes a prediction of the destruction of *Jerusalem*. the wasting of the land, and the rejection of the body of that Nation for many generations, that they should neither be a Church nor Kingdome, as they were before the coming of Christ. This judgement is here generally published, the alarm being given by the voice of the Prophet; as the Lords trumpeter; and to shew the certainty of it, he speaks to *Lebanon*, whereby we are not to understand so much the Temple build of the Cedars of *Lebanon*, one gate whereof opened of its own accord before their last destruction as a preface of its future burning. Nor yet that the *Romanes* were to cut down the trees of that Forrest, to imploy them in the siege against *Jerusalem*: But this being a strong part on the border of the land, by this the Lord would signifie, that nothing should be so strong in *Judea* (which was populous and flourishing like that Forrest, and therefore compared to it, *Ezekk.* 17. 3.) as to resist the violence of the enemy making havock with fire and sword: but that what was eminent, persons or Cities; (signified by Cedars) should go to ruine. *Doct.* 1. The Lord may have great things to do for a people; who, yet by their own provocations may not only foreflew the performance thereof, but provoke him to lay them desolate, and cast them off for a time; for, so much doth this Chapter, subjoyned

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joynd to the former, teach. 2. The determined judgements of God against the visible Church for sinne, are of good use to be known by her, and are to be intimated from the Word, that the wicked may not harden themselves in presumption, and that the godly may be warned in time, and when they see the execution of threatnings, may be confirmed to expect the accomplishment of promises also; for, for these causes, and uses, is the judgement denounced, so long before-hand. 3. Divine vengeance pursuing sinne will make fearfull desolation of most flourishing Countreys: It is a fire entering in a faire Forrest, devouring and burning all to ashes. 4. When God pursues a controversie, nothing will be able to stand in his way, every thing will make patent doores, and what is most eminent will succumb: So much doth this forme of speech teach us, *Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy Cedars.*

Verf. 2. *Howle Firre-tree, for the Cedar is fallen, because all the mighty are spoiled: howle, O ye Oakes of Basban, for the Forrest of the vintage is come down.*

The Prophet persists in the metaphor of a Forrest, and threatens destruction to men of inferiour rank, and meaner places of the Countrey, who could not expect to be spared, when the most eminent places are overrunne, and greater persons cut off, no more then Firre-trees can think to subhsist when Cedars fall; or Oakes in the open field of Basban, (how strong soever) can think to scape fire, when the Forrest of the vintage, or flourishing vineyards (which use to be well kept) or, (as the words also will reade) when defenced Forrests (such as Lebanon) are destroyed. Doct. 1. Judgements for sinne pursuing the Church will be universall, teaching the greatest, and even the meaner sort, who may seem to be beneath the fury of enemies, are not to expect, but that the stroke shall reach them. one way or other; for, Cedars, Firres, Oakes, and the Forrest of the vintage, are threatened. 2. Whatever be the stupidity of men in their guilt, yet God pursuing for sinne, will make them sensible, and to know their misery, which is ordinarily all that men attaine to, who feel the stroke, and are not led up to see the cause; this repeated command, *to howle*, is not any enjoying of

it as a duty, or, approbation of their carnal lamentations, but a prediction of the greatnesse of their calamity, and what their temper under it should be.

Vers. 3. There is a voice of the howling of the shepherds: for their glory is spoiled, a voice of the roaring of young lions, for the pride of Jordan is spoiled.

A particular denunciation is sent forth against the Rulers, who being shepherds in office proved ravening young lions in their practice: it is foretold they shall howle and roare, because their glory and splendor shall be brought down, in the destruction of the people, (in the multitude of whom is their glory, *Prov. 14. 28.*) and of that numerous and flourishing Nation of the Jewes, resembled by the yearly proud overflowing of *Jordan*, *Josb. 3. 15.* which ranne through their land. *Doct. 1.* In times of calamity greatest ones will not be spared, and these who having authority, do prove wicked and abuse their power, may expect to share deep in the judgement; for, *Shepherds shall howle, and young lions shall roare*, till their voice be heard as farre off. 2. However men in power usually despise and account little of their subjects and people, as if all were made for them: yet strokes on people, ought to affect Magistrates, as being punished in their peoples calamities, and wanting them, they would soon finde themselves to be nothing; for, if this *their glory*, and the pride of *Jordan* be spoiled, they will howle. 3. A people enjoying much prosperity, and waxing wanton under it, do ripen themselves for a judgement; for, when they resemble the pride of *Jordan*, they are spoiled.

Vers. 4. Thus saith the LORD my God, Feed the flock of the slaughter;

5. Whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them, say, Blessed be the LORD, for I am rich; and their own shepherds pity them not.

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This judgement is again repeated and amplified, from the cause procuring the same, which was their rejecting of Christ, unto whom somewhat of this Prophecie is expressly applied, *Matth. 26.* This the Prophet not only foretells, but represents at large as a thing in acting, making also use of some external types (as appeares, *v. 15.*) to set it out to the present Jewes. And first he represents a charge laid on Christ by his Father, to have a care of that people, during the prefixed time of his patience, while this calamity was going on, and that people were used as sheep appointed for the slaughter, by all these, whether Natives or Forreigners, that had any power over them, who using them severely at their pleasure (as men either slay or sell their flocks, as being their own,) were so farre from thinking they did wrong, that they thought it a blessing from God to be made rich, though it were by the misery of the people. In this time Christ gets a charge by his Prophets, and especially by his own coming in the flesh, to be a shepherd to the Jewes, chiefly for the elects sake among them. *Doff. 1.* Christ is the great shepherd and overseer of his Church, who not only went about that office in his own person, but in all ages provides his Church of leaders, by whom he feeds and hath a care of her, and he it is through whom any of these meanes do her good; for, unto him it is said, *Feed the flock.* 1. The benefit and comfort of Christs office and relation to his Church, is best seen, when the rise of it is seen to be not only from his own tender heart, but from a command laid upon him by his Father, to take charge of the Church, and elect in it, as one that must be accountable; and from a Covenant of Redemption, whereby the Father hath engaged himselfe to be a God unto his Sonne as Mediator, and to these that flee to him, and to save all these whom he should redeem: Thus is Christs Office held out unto us here, *Thus saith the Lord my God, Feed the flock.* 3. Herein doth the Lords indulgence and long-suffering toward his Church appear, that he doth not inflict saddest strokes, nor totally ruine, till it be seen, that Christ and an offer of mercy is rejected: and that calamities come to an height, only when the matter is otherwise past remedy; for here, before this growing calamity come to an height, Christ is sent out to feed the flock. 4. It may commend Christ to the Churches choice, that much trouble will endear her to his care, if she embrace him; and his people who make use of him shall finde that no afflictions shall estrange him

him from them, but rather make them the more capable of his feeding, and him the more tender of them : and that the more they are wronged by others who should guide and be Pastors to them, he will see the more to their wel-being ; and that he will be near at hand under calamities, to welcome any who flee to him, to be freed from them, or from the curse of them ; for, he will feed the flock of the slaughter, whose possessors slay them. 5. As corrupt Rulers are oftentimes made the scourge and plague of a sinfull people, so it is great cruelty in men, to imploy their power given them for the good of a people, to their ruine ; for, it is marked as the way of the peoples calamity, and the Rulers sinne, *Their possessors slay them, and their own shepherds pity them not.* 6. It is a great snare upon oppressors, not only to be given up to that sinne, but (partly through their consciences being deaded and blinded with such a grosse iniquity, and partly through their looking on the oppressed guiltinesse, or that themselves are spared, and not punished when they do evil) not to be convinced and challenged for it, but rather to think sinne a duty ; this is the snare and judgement of Rulers here, *Their possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty.* 7. Prosperity and advantage by an evill course is a great snare, and a chiefe cause why men will not be convinced of the evill of it ; for, *I am rich,* takes their mindes much up. 8. Sinne is most wickedly and dangerously committed and defended, when men colour all with a pretence of piety, pretending to observe and acknowledge providence, when in the mean time they make providence and successe a mark of Divine approbation, how contrary soever to the revealed will of God their course be ; for, thus do these oppressors, *They say, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich.* They take their enriching by oppression, for a token of Gods approbation, and cover all with a pretence of acknowledging of God.

Verf. 6. *For I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the LORD : but lo, I will deliver the men every one into his neighbours hand, and into the hand of his King, and they shall smite the land, and out of their hand I will not deliver them.*

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The Lord expounds his minde further, concerning this going on calamity of the *Jewes*, when Christ was sent unto them, and declares himselfe to be the author of it, and that he had determined, after they had rejected this offer of Christ (as is after cleared) to cast off all pity, and give them up to intestine divisions; and to be cut off and their land laid waste, by the *Romane* Emperour (whom they chused to be their King, rejecting Christ, *Job. 19. 15.*) In all which there should be no such moderation or delivery as they had found in former troubles: And therefore Christ is sent unto them, as to have a care of the elect in these calamities; so in Gods righteous judgement, to fill up their cup, that the calamity may come to an height. *Doff. 1.* Whatever be Christs errand to the elect in a land, yet his coming to a people with his offer of mercy, may oftentimes be the forerunner of saddest calamities, by reason of their sinfulness, which by despising of mercy, ripens fast for a stroke; therefore this is subjoynd, when Christ is sent to feed the flock, *For I will no more pity, &c.* 2. It is necessary to see God to be the Author of calamities, whether for humiliation under them, or comfort by them; therefore doth the Lord own all the oppression done, or to be done to them, *I will no more pity.* 3. The Lords pity and compassion is the fountaine of the Churches happiness, which being taken away (as it hath its period toward the visible Church,) opens the door to all misery; for, their calamity begins, *I will no more pity the inhabitants of the land, saith the Lord.* 4. As seditious and intestine divisions are a forerod and a token of Gods laying aside pity toward a people, so are they ordinarily the fore-runner of judgements from forreigners; for, *I will deliver every man into his neighbours hand,* is a fruit of his not pitying, and a fore-runner of falling in the hands of their king. 5. Whatever it be that men chuse as a happiness in opposition unto Christ, shall turne to be their plague; for, the *Jewes* chused *Cesar*, when they rejected Christ, and here is the issue, *I will deliver every man into the hand of his king, and they shall smite the land.* 6. Albeit the Lord do sometimes, in love to his people, moderate their procured judgements, and speedily deliver them, yet he will not alwayes do so, but when provocation is given, and severity breaks forth, he will let them lie and consume under their calamity; *Out of their hand I will not deliver them.*

Verf. 7. *And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poore of the flock: and I took unto me two staves, the one I called Beauty, and the other I called Bands, and I fed the flock.*

In the next place is represented Christs undertaking of this charge, especially for the poore and Elects sake, and his going diligently about it, signified by two shepherds staves: the first whereof, called *Beauty*, holds forth (as is expounded, v. 10) the sweet and beautiful order of his Covenant, and the doctrine thereof, whereby the Church is directed in faith, worship and obedience of God: the second called *Bands*, signifies (as we may gather from v. 14.) that policie in Church and State whereby they are kept one, and without schismes among themselves. **Doct. 1.** Christ the Mediatour became an obedient servane, and is willing, and takes pleasure to be employed for his Churches good; and will have a tender consideration of their case; for, when the charge is laid on Christ, *I will feed the flock of the slaughter*, saith he. **2.** Christ in his care over the visible Church, hath an especial eye to his Elect, and the regenerate in it, how abject-like soever they seem in the eyes of men, or in their outward condition; for, saith he, *I will feed even you, O poore of the flock*; who, what they were, see, v. 11. **3.** Christ is a faithful shepherd, singular and incomparable in his care and diligence about his people; for, saith he, *I took unto me two staves*, whereas other shepherds use but one. **4.** The Covenant and doctrine revealed by Christ unto his Church, as it sets forth the beauty and excellencie of God, so it is beautiful and sweetly ordered in it self, so as faith and obedience sweetly work to others hands, and make the followers thereof to be beautiful and excellent above all people; for, *the one staffe I called Beauty*. **5.** As unity and concord in a Church, is a fruit of Christs feeding his flock, so policy and order, whereby unity is preserved is a rich blessing; *The other I called Bands*. **6.** Christs performances are answearable to his undertakings; what he saith he doth, and his practice will never give his promise the lie; for unto his promise, *I will feed*, is subjoynd, *And I fed the flock*.

Verf.

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Verf. 8. *Three shepherds also I cut off in one month: and my soul loathed them, and their souls also abhorred me.*

Followes a particular account of Christs feeding, with their ill use of that mercy, and his displeasure thereupon. He cut off in a short time many of their wicked Governours, partly by calamities, (which certainly imported that there had been no small plague on people, when publick judgements cut off so many Rulers,) and turning of Priests out of their Offices frequently, and especially by his own Ministry; bringing in contempt the sects of their false teachers, Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes, all which Christ did to reclaim them, but in vain; their carriage was such as provoked him against them; whereby also they were more estranged from God. *Doff.* 1. Christ taking a work in hand, can effectuate strange things speedily; for, *in one month*, (or a short time) *he cut off three* (or many) *shepherds*. 2. Christ useth many times to make way for his own enlargement, by sending calamities thick and threefold, hereby to lay a necessity on people to come to him, by cutting off such as had been instruments of ill unto his people; that he may commend his affection unto them, and by staining and overclouding false teachers and false wayes, that himself alone may be seen choise-worthy; for, *cutting off three shepherds in one month*, imports all these; he cut off evil governours, who had oppressed them; with whom no doubt many of the people felt; and brought their false teachers in contempt: all which he did to commend himself unto them as an excellent shepherd. 3. Christ exercising his tenderest care of his Church, is sometimes met with very provoking carriage, depriving her of his favour, which should be so much the bitterer to bear, as that Christ takes not away such a mercy willingly; for, when Christ is thus feeding, they instead of turning to him, carry themselves so, as *that his soul loathed them*, or *was straitened for them*; or, *abhorred them*, but with grief, as his frequent complaints declareth. 4. It is a great judgement upon people, and a token of much wrath, when Christs declaring himself provoked, and withdrawing from them, doth estrange and alienate them more from him, and not stir them up rather to pursue him, when he seems

seems to depart; for, thus was it here: *My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.* 5. As the contempt of Christ is the great sin of the visible Church, so where Christ is not heartily received, it cannot choose, but he will become burdensome and loathsome company: *Their soul abhorred me.*

Verf. 9. *Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die: and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off, and let the rest eat, every one the flesh of another.*

Having spoken of their ingratitude in part, he repeats the calamity flowing from his displeasure, by way of sentence pronounced for this their sin; and threatens that he will quit his charge, and give them up to perish, partly by ordinary judgements, and partly by the foreign and intestine sword. *Doct.* 1. The patience of Christ toward his visible Church, will have a period; when they contemn him, he will wearie: and where he is provoked to loath, he may forsake. *Then said I, I will not feed you.* 2. Christ's forsaking and giving over his care of a people, exposes them unto all miseries and calamities: for, 1. Contempt of Christ, (for which he forsakes) is provocation sufficient to draw down saddest judgements. 2. Men have of themselves infirmities and diseases sufficient to make them completely miserable, where he doth not interpose. 3. And the world is so full of hazards, and the Church so malign'd in it, that if he take away the hedge, every step will be on destruction. 4. Contemners of the Gospel are given up to ill tempers, to make them run on ruine. 5. And who will pity, or care for these, toward whom Christ hath cast off pity? *Then it will be, that that dieth, let it die: and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off, and let the rest eat, every one the flesh of another.*

Verf. 10. *And I took my Staffe, even Beauty: and cut it asunder, that I might break my Covenant, which I had made with all the people.*

11. *And it was broken in that day: and so the part of the flock that waited upon me, know that it was the Word of the LORD.* Christ

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Christs renouncing of his charge, is confirmed in the representation, by breaking the staffe of Beaurty, the badge of his office, whereby is signified a breaking of that Covenant made with the body of that people: and a plaguing them not only with heresie and superstition in place of the sound doctrine contained in the Covenant, but also by taking away the dignities, priviledges and benefits promised to them in that Covenant. Which when it should be put in execution, the godly would observe and reade Gods justice according to his Word, in it. *Doff.* 1. When Christ is provoked to forsake a people for their ingratitude, even their choicest mercies, and such as they thought surest, as being by Covenant are fore-sauled, the Covenant being but conditional to the body of the visible Church: for, *I took my staffe Beaurty, and cut it asunder, that I might break my Covenant, &c.* See, *Nam. 14. 34.* *1 Sam. 2. 30.*

2. It is the height of a peoples misery to be cast out of Gods Covenant, to be pestered with errors in stead of the sound and wholesom doctrine thereof, to be denied interest in God, to have no ground of hope for access to him in straits, and to be exposed to all the judgements threatened against Covenant-breakers, which are sadder then if they had never had interest: this was the Jewes judgement, *I brake my Covenant which I had made with all the people.* 3. Christ is Omnipotent to make his judgements effectual, and to reach his end upon a people: for, *It was broken in that day.* 4. Whatever effects judgements have upon the wicked, yet the godly will get right sights and uses of them: for, *the poore of the flock knew, &c.* 5. A seeing of Gods hand, and the accomplishment of the Word in judgments, and reading of them by the Word, is the way to get right use of them, for, *They knew that it was the Word of the Lord.* 6. The right frame of the godly, especially in times of judgement, and for making use thereof, is (as they are oftentimes poor in their outward condition, so) to be spiritually poor, and empty, that they may wait on Christ, and depend on him, as the handmaid on her Mistress: for, *They are the poore of the flock that waited upon me, &c.* observed me, saith Christ.

Verf. 11. And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price: and if not, forbear: so they weighed for my price thirty peeces of silver.

13. *And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price, that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the LORD.*

The ingratitude of the Jewes toward Christ is further represented (under the type of a shepherd demanding his wages, wherein it seems *Zerubabab* did act somewhat) in that they flew him, and thought him worth no more for all his service, then such a small summe as might induce *Judas* to betray him, which as it would scarce hire a potter to make tile to cover the Temple, (and therefore was to be cast to him in the type,) so in the event, providence so over-ruled, that the price of Christs blood bought a potters field, to be a standing monument of their contempt of Christ, of their shedding of his blood, and valuing him at so low a rate, *Mat. 26. 15.* and *29. 7, 10. Doct.* 1. Christs condescending to take care of his Church, puts her infinitely in his debt, and layeth obligations upon her, to endeavour some return: and it will be the sad dittle of contemners of him, that they had the offer of a benefit which could not be esteemed nor recompenced; for, Christ is a shepherd that may justly crave wages; and being provoked, will let the provokers know that it is so: *And I said, Give me my price.* 2. Christ doth not call for any recompence of his services as it he needed it, or any thing men could do: but to take a proof of peoples affection to him, or their contempt of him: for, he requires it as one indifferent for his part, only they would bewray their hearts: *If ye think good, give, and if not, forbear.* 3. Christ, for all his pains and care, is ordinatily little thought of, and more basely rewarded; then mens meanest servants; *They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver,* the ordinary price of a slave; *Exod. 21. 32.* and more he to be cast unto the Potter, then given to Christ. 4. When men turn contemners and undervaluers of Christ, they will readily turn persecutors, and he will be thought worthy of nothing but death, and that which may help to bring him to it: for, thus it was in the event, Christs price was thirty pieces to *Judas* to betray him. 5. The contempt offered to Christ as Mediatour, watching himself immediately or by his servants, for the good of the Church, is accounted of God to be a contemning of himself who sends him: *The Lord*

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said, *Cast it to the Potter, a goodly price that I was prized at of them.* 6. God will in due time make the consciences of Contemnners confesse the horridnesse of their guilt; and not only so, but cause them by their practice to proclaim it; for, so did Judas by his repentance, and casting back the silver in the Temple; and the High Priests by their not daring to put it among the treasures of the Temple, as being the price of blood, and by their purchasing with it a base field; this was the full accomplishment of that typical action, *I cast them to the Potter in the house of the Lord.*

Verſ. 14. *Then I cut aſunder mine other ſtaffe, even Bands, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Iſrael.*

Followes yet again their calamity, by way of punishment for this their ingratitude: and first, they are threatened with the breach of brotherly concord, (as when Judah and Iſrael were rent aſunder under Rehoboam, because of Solomons idolatry,) and with the removal of peace Civil or Ecclesiastical, (as was at large verified in the Siege before their last destruction) so making way for the compleat breaking and scattering of the body of that Nation, as is seen this day, and for a long time obstructing of that brotherhood betwixt Judah and Iſrael under Christ, promised of old, *Ezech. 37. 22.* all which is signified by breaking the *ſtaffe of bands.* Doct. 1. Christ hath multiplicity and variety of judgements, whereby to let contemnners of him see and feel, that so to do is their great misery; for, he hath yet *another ſtaffe, even Bands, to cut aſunder.* 2. It is a sad judgement, and fruit of a contemned Christ, when a Church is given up to rents and schismes, and when peace and concord is broken among a people, this ordinarily proves a preſage of sad scattering, and an hinderance of many choice blessings; thus is Christs death punished: *I brake the brotherhood between Judah and Iſrael.*

Verſ. 15. *And the LORD ſaid unto me, Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd.*

16. For so, I will raise up a shepherd in the land, which shall not visit those that be cut off, neither shall seek the young one, nor heale that that is broken, nor feed that that standeth still: but he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and reare their claws in pieces.

Secondly, they are threatened to be given up as a prey to false teachers, and to be devoured by all robbers. Of this Zechariah is commanded to use a type, v. 15. which is expounded, v. 16. that they shall be given up to Rulers, who will not only neglect all duty toward the flock, but also cruelly prey upon them.

Doff. 1. Contemners of Christ and his easie yoke, are justly punished with unfaithful and corrupt Rulers, under whom they will groan; for, thus is the Jewes ingratitude punished by a foolish (or wicked) shepherd raised up in the land. 2. Though Government and Governours be in themselves choice mercies, yet where Governours do not their duty, they are a great plague, and a compendious meanes to draw on general judgements; for, so were they to Judah, I will raise up a shepherd that will not visit, &c. 3. The visible Church consists of variety of tempers, conditions and infirmities, which are to be wisely considered, and proportionable and suitable meanes applied by those who would approve themselves to be faithful Rulers: it is may be gathered from the properties of this false shepherd: there are the hidden or cut off, lost and gone out of the way, whom it is a fault not to visit and seek out: there are the young ones, more apt to wander than others, whom it is their duty in a special way to seek, and have an eye to. There are the broken with afflictions and challenges, who are to be healed, not crushed. There are that stand still for weaknesse, not being able to go on, and these are to be fed and borne (as the world also is) with tenderesse and compassion if need be. 4. It is a marke of unfaithful Rulers in Church and State, to minde their own profit and gaine chiefly, and to be cruel unto those whom God hath committed to their care: for such were they, He shall eat the flesh of the fat, and reare their claws in pieces, to wit, by overdrawing of them.

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Verf. 17. Wo to the idol-shepherd that leaveth the flock: the sword shall be upon his arme, and upon his right eye: his arme shall be clean dried up, and his right eye shall be witerly darkened.

Thirdly, he threatens to punish these Rulers, and the people with them, even to the breaking of the Civil and Ecclesiastical State, and scattering the people: declaring that a sword shall be upon their arme and right eye: whereby we are not to understand the taking away of their gifts and abilities, and the power and life of them, which is imported already in that they are *foolish shepherds*, nor yet only peculiar judgements on Rulers, in their authority and prudence, for they are raised up here to bring, or occasion judgements on a people: but that Gods judgement should cut off their power, the people being cut off and scattered, who are the arme and strength of Rulers, and should also follow Ecclesiastical Rulers, who are the *right eye* of the Common-wealth, (for the people and Civil Ruler considered as a Kingdom, are the *arme* which is to be broken, and the people and Priests considered as a Church, are the *right eye* to be put out) and declaring also that this judgement should be total and irrecoverable. *Dott. 1.* Such as take on any employment and office, and make no conscience of doing duty, are in Gods account but statues and images, he is the *idol-shepherd*. 2. It is a sad plague upon men, to be left to themselves, to be unfaithful in their trust, and it portends great wo and judgement to come; for, *wo to the idol-shepherd*. 3. Unfaithful Rulers, nor discharging their duty, are in the same guilt before God, with them who turne their back upon their charge in times of greatest danger: for, *they leave the flock*, in respect of duty, though we read not of their running away from them. 4. Wicked Rulers given to a people in anger, and for a punishment of sin, will soon perform their work, and bring ruine upon themselves, and on these they are sent to be a plague unto: they will soon ripen a people for scattering, and Civil and Ecclesiastical authority for breaking: *The sword shall be upon his arme, and right eye*. 5. When a people and their Rulers provoke God to break the face of Church and State, and to scatter them, it is a stroke that is not soon recovered: for, *His arme shall be clean dried*

dried up, and his right eye utterly darkened, that is, their office and a face of Government shall not soon be recovered, the people being dissipated, as appears on that Nation to this day.

CHAP. XII.

IN this chapter, the Lord, who is Omnipotent to performe what he saith, v. 1. promisseth unto Israel. 1. That the endeavour of enemies against them, shall tend to their own ruine, v. 2, 3. 2. That he will prove his favour toward them, by defeating every means employed to wrong them, v. 4. 3. That they shall be blessed with godly Governours, v. 5. And 4. That he will blesse their endeavours with successe against their enemies, and in restoring Jerusalem, v. 6. 5. That weakest places should finde the first proof of his protection, v. 7. 6. That he would defend that people, and increase their strength in straits, v. 8. 7. That he will seek out even their scattered and secret enemies to destroy them, v. 9. And lastly, that he will give unto them the Spirit of Conversion and repentance, for their rejecting and crucifying the Messiah, which will be very vehement and sincere, v. 10. as when the people lamented *Josiah*, v. 11. and general, throughout all ranks and families, in their private humiliations, v. 12, 13, 14.

Verf. 1. THe burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the Heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.

This chapter is a continuation of that prophesie in the tenth chapter; for as the Lord thought it necessary to season these comfortable promises with a denunciation of the desolation, to come upon the Jewish Nation, lest the secure and wicked should break their

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their neck upon them, chap. 11. so lest the godly hearing of these calamities, should think that all hope were gone; the Lord subjoynes many comfortable promises in this chapter, which however they have their own accomplishment, and yield comfort to the *Israel* of God in all ages, yet the full accomplishment of them is reserved for converted *Israel*; for the day of performing these things, is the time of their turning to God, and of their mourning, as we see, v. 9, 10, 11, &c. Among these promises, two things are premised in this verse, 1. The nature of this doctrine, (at least a great part of it) that it is a burdensome word for the good and behoof of *Israel*, being threatenings against *Israel*'s enemies, but promises unto her. 2. Because the promises many of them might seem incredible, therefore the Lord not only prefixes his Name, but proves his own Omnipotency, from his creating the Heavens, founding the earth on nothing, and creating the soul of man, which may assure the Church of the certainty of what he promiseth and saith. *Dock.* 1. As the Lord will not alwayes write bitter things against his people, but in due time let out somewhat for their advantage: so times of comfort and love to them, will be sad times to their enemies, and the promises unto them will be sad threatenings to persecutors; there is, *the burden of the Word of the Lord for Israel.* 2. The greatest obstruction of the Churches comfort from the promises, is caused by their own incredulity and unbelief, that will not give God the glory of truth in promising, and so leaves themselves discouraged, say what he will; therefore is it so needful to use so many confirmations of faith when God promiseth any thing. 3. Not only doth the all-sufficient Nature of God put the truth of his promises out of question, but the visible effects of his Omnipotency, in creating heaven, and earth by his naked word, and the upholding of the earth as a ball in the midst of the aire, without any other foundation then a word of command, may shame all flesh from suspecting his ability to make good whatever he saith; from this is the ensuing doctrine confirmed, *Jehovah saith it, who stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth.* 4. Albeit that the Parent produceth man in respect of his bodie, and the uniting of the soul with the bodie, yet the Original of the soul of every man is from God, and it is immediatly created and infused into the body by him; for, it is here reckoned among the works of Creation and Omnipotencie that God forms the spirit of

man within him. 3. Every misbeliever of Gods Omnipotency to perform his promises, carrieth in his own bosome a refutation of himself; the very excellencie of his soul, created so like God, which being put into a dead lump of clay, doth animate it, and fit it for excellent employments, may teach him what incredible things God can work, and may particularly assure him, that God hath power over the spirits of men which he hath made, to order them so, as men shall not hinder the accomplishment of his will: for, this is an antidote against infidelity; *God formes the spirit of man within him.*

Verf. 2. *Behold, I Will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege, both against Judah, and against Jerusalem.*

The substance of all this ensuing doctrine, may be reduced to these three Heads: that the Lord will plague the Churches persecutors, and give his Church victory over them, that he will defend, preserve and establish his Church, which followeth on the former; and that he will give his Church conversion and repentance, as the meanes to hasten on and perfect the other two. These three are in this chapter propounded, enlarged and amplified in several particular promises, for their more distinct and particular information and encouragement.

The first promise is in summe thus, that the trouble whereunto enemies shall put the Church, shall be so far from ruining her, that troubling of her shall be her troublers ruine, as if they had drunk a cup of poison, when they would swallow her, which shall produce trembling by exhausting their vigour and radical heat, or slumbering and astonishment, and make them reele and dash like drunken men, till they fall and perish. **Verf. 1.** Even when the Lord hath done great things for his people, and delivered them, they are not to expect exemption from troubles and exercises; for, here it is supposed that rejected Israel are not utterly cast off, but restored, and yet are in straits and besieged, *All the people round about are in the siege, both against Judah, and against Jerusalem.* 2. The enemies of the Church are very cruel, and earnest in their pursuit of her, and

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and it is as great delight to them to vex and devoure her, as it is for a thirsty man to drink; for, *Jerusalem is a cup*, which they are earnest to drink down. 3. When the Lord permits his Church to be in a condition of trouble and hazard, he cannot only make enemies to misse in their desire, and be never a whit the nearer their point, when they have (as they think) devoured and swallowed her down, but will make their opposition and apparent successe to be their ruine, and never to cease till it undo themselves; for, *Jerusalem is a cup of trembling, or, poison*, which is most deadly when it is drunk out. 4. The advantage of the Churches low estate, is best seen, when God, and what he can make out of trouble, is looked unto; otherwise consulting with flesh and blood will not discover it; for, it is *God who makes Jerusalem a cup of trembling*, which she could not be of her selfe.

Verf. 3. *And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces: though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.*

The same promise is repeated in another similitude, taken from mens trying of their strength, in lifting of some great and heavy stone: The summe is, the Church, and especially restored *Israel*, (for that is *that day* pointed at here, v. 9, 10, 11.) shall be so fixed, that whoever would seek to remove it, should but break themselves, even though all the world should conspire to effectuate it. *Doff.* 1. The promises of God concerning the welfare of his Church, are neither easily taken up in their fulnesse, nor believed, and therefore are to be studied over and over again: so much doth this repetition of the promise teach us. 2. The Church is looked on by enemies in the world, as a troublesome neighbour, whom they would gladly remove, and be rid of, and they will not spare to prove their utmost strength, nor care to take on heauey burdens, so it may effectuate their purpose; for, *Jerusalem is a stone for all people*, which they would have unfixed and removed, and would *burden themselves* for that end. 3. The Church is so established by diuine power, and by vertue of Christs charter, and the indignation of God against all such as seek to molest her, is so heauey

and insupportable, that all who essay to shake her, come to seek, and do finde their own ruine; while as she remains established; for, *God will make Jerusalem a burdonsom stone for all people, all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in peeces.* 4. As it is the Churches lot to finde fewest friends in the world of any society: so the multitude and strength of opposers can contribute nothing for carrying on the designe of ruining the Church, all the world will effectuate as little, and be as unable to resist the deserved vengeance, as the meanest man in it; for, *God will do this, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.*

Verf. 4. In that day saith the LORD, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madnesse, and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.

The second promise confirms and explains the former, shewing that the fountain-cause of this dispensation toward the Church is, Gods restoring them to his favour, from whom he had hid his face so long, and his vigilant and affectionate providence over them: and that the way of disappointing and ruining enemies, shall be by defeating their wisdom, counsel and strength, and plaguing every means they employ. Doct. 1. There is no wisdom, counsel nor strength can subsist where God is Party, and he needs no more, but blow upon all enemies and their meanes, and they will be to seek, and run madly and blindly on their own ruine; for, *In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madnesse, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.* 1. However the Lord may hide his face for a time from his people, and Atheisme will alwayes be ready to say in trouble; that the Lord doth not regard: yet in due time he will prove, that his people are not wronged, but when he hath been a witness and taken notice, that he affects them, and hath an eye upon them; for, *I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, saith the Lord.* 3. The Lords favouring of his people, and his providence and eye upon them, will not consist in bare observation, but when he hath marked their wandrings, reares and afflictions,

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ons, that they are come to an height, his favour and care will shine forth in wonderful effects: *I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness.*

Verf. 5. *And the Governours of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the LORD of hostes their God.*

The third promise holds forth the disposition of *Israel*, as to the use of means, when the Lord thus appears for them, and especially of the Governours, who should be the instruments of their good. It is promised they shall have Governours, for directing all their affaires, and managing their wars, and that they shall be holy men, not placing their confidence in multitudes of men, but every one esteeming it strength sufficient that God is reconciled with their subjects, and reckoning that these, how weak and few soever, shall be able, through Gods blessing to carry through in any difficultie. *Doff.* 1. It is a token of great mercy to a people, when the Lord not only delivers them from confusion, and seales Rulers over them, but when he makes Rulers really holy and streight for him; for, *Judah* in that day, shall have *governours* so qualified. 2. It is an evidence of Piety in Rulers, when publick affaires do touch them as near, and are as faithfully seen to, as if they were their own particular; for, so shall every Ruler reckon, that help to the publick is a life to themselves, who cordially wrestle under it; *My strength* shall they call it. 3. It is another mark of Piety, when Rulers, beside their personal carriage, studie to advance Piety where they have power, and are encouraged by the growth of Piety, and are encouragements to such as incline that way; for, that shall be the Governours refreshment, that their people are reconciled to God. 4. It is a great evidence of Piety, when any are fully perswaded of the truths they receive, and generally assent to, when truths are not received in a fleeting superficial way, but rooted in the heart; so that what they say, *they say in their heart.* 5. A people reconciled unto God, are the great strength of a Kingdom or Nation, and they will prove help to it indeed, how contemptible soever they seem to be; for, so shall these

these Governours reckon, *The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord, &c.* 6. Whatever good may be expected of an holy people, is not to be expected from any inherent worth or holiness in them, but from Gods free favour toward them, and with much immediate dependance on him, lest God being deprived of his glory, they be blasted: therefore is it distinctly added, *They shall be my strength in the Lord of hostes their God.*

Vers. 6. *In that day will I make the Governours of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand, and on the left: and Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.*

The fourth promise is the same in substance with the first, under another similitude, holding forth, that these godly Governours should not be disappointed of their confidence, (of which, v. 5.) but they and the people under them should be victorious, and overcome their enemies, as a furnace consumes timber, and a torch burns a sheaf of dry straw. Which promise is further amplified, that *Jerusalem* thus preserved, should be inhabited again, which that it be not understood only spiritually of the Church, it is added, that *Jerusalem's own place is even in Jerusalem*, which seems clearly to point at their repossession of their land, and of that city, not as being then any more typical, but as being the most kindly inheritance to *Israel*, when they shall be converted as a Nation. Doct. 1. Faith and hope in God will never be ashamed; but these who promise themselves much good in God, shall finde it so; for, *the Governours of Judah*, who expected strength in God, v. 5. do get what they expected, and are made like an hearth of fire, &c. 2. Enemies of the Church may expect to be destroyed by their own assaults and enterprises against her; for their coming to smother or extinguish her, is casting of wood upon a hearth, or, a sheaf upon a torch of fire, which puts not out the fire or torch, but burns themselves. 3. The destruction of such as afflict the Church shall not be ordinary, but violent, total and irrecoverable; for,

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as fire and a torch, they shall devour all the people round about; on the right hand, and on the left; which doth not point at the Churches cruelty, but at the way of enemies being ruined.

4. No opposition made unto the Church, will be able to make any promises given unto her, or gracious purposes of God concerning her, ineffectual; for, notwithstanding all their enemies, or warres and troubles they may be put to, yet, *Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in Jerusalem.*

Verl. 7. The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnifie themselves against Judah.

The fifth promise holds forth especially Gods method, in bringing about this promised salvation and help, that the weak villages in the countrey should get the first proof of his protection, that so God may have the glory of saving them, and such as have either power or prudence, (as a walled town, and great Rulers) may have no cause to glory of any excellencie in them above others, to make themselves happy. *Doff. 1. The safety of all the Church, is a matter out of question, however the Lord do not take the Churches own way, meanes or method to bring it about; for, the Lord will save, though the question be, whom he will save first, See, Hos. 1. 7. 2. The Lord hath, and will alwayes so order, as that in his Church there should be variety of conditions and estates, for letting forth variety of proofs of himself toward and upon them; for, there are tents of Judah, the house of David, and inhabitants of Jerusalem. 3. The Lord so ordereth his gracious providences, as that they who are lowest in trouble, and have least wherewith to help themselves, do lie nearest his help; for, the Lord shall save the tents of Judah first. 4. The Lords way of conveying deliverance toward his people will be so ordered, as that he alone will be seen to be the doer of it, and he will stain the pride of all glory, and take occasion of boasting from all, and the more excellency that any have, he will put them the more frequently to be humbled before him; for, he saves the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnifie themselves against Judah.*

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Verse 8. *In that day shall the LORD defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David: and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the LORD before them.*

The sixth promise is of divine protection, (taking in the inhabitants of Jerusalem al. 8, though the tents of Judah since the fruit of it first, v. 7.) and of strength, wherein is held forth that (as their Governours expected through faith, v. 5.) when that people shall come to any hazard, the feeble among them shall be endued with heroick fortitude, such as David had, and that their Rulers and great ones shall be raised to a divine and Angelick pitch of strength, which is to be understood, that they shall be so through faith in Christ their Head, who is the true root and off-spring of David, and they his familie and traine, and who is true God, and as he was the Angel of the Covenant, who went before the people in their deliverance out of Egypt, Exod. 14. 19. and 23. 23. so he promiseth to prove himselfe the same again. *Dott.* 1. The Lord will so have a care of all his people; as, however he see meet to humble some of them at some times, and to delay his help till they be humbled, yet it is not his purpose to deny them altogether, therefore is the promise made particularly to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Davids house, to shew that however he would prefer Judahs tents to them in the matter of speedy help, yet he will not reject them: *In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, &c.* 2. The Lords protection is the sure safe-guard of his Church, beyond any thing they get strength to do themselves, yea, it is the strength of their strength, to abide under his shadow with it; therefore is the promise of defence premitted to that of their strength, as being their sure refuge, and that which makes them strong; *The Lord will defend Jerusalem, so he that is feeble shall be as David, &c.* 3. However the Lord may keep his people in a low & weak condition for their exercise, yet he hath undertaken to let out proofes of his strength in them, in a time of need, in a singular way, and will make their weaknesse in themselves a preface of their being strengthened in him: *He that is feeble among them, at that day shall be as David.* 4. None do attaine in this life to

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that measure of strength and courage, but they do yet stand in need of more, and ought to be on the growing hand: for, the house of David needs a promise of this, as well as the feeble. 5. As Christ will be unto his Church in her need, whatever he hath been unto her at any time; so what Christ is, that are believers in him their Head, as they need it, all fullnesse dwelling in him for their behoof: for, as Christ had been as an Angel of God before that people, so will he be yet, and the house of David so in him.

Verse 9. *And it shall come to passe in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the Nations that come against Jerusalem.*

In the seventh promise, Gods purpose of destroying the Churches enemies is repeated and confirmed, that though they were never so many, yet God will destroy them, and will be serious in effectuating it, seeking out secret plotters as well as open enemies, or seeking them out after they are scatered, and their enterprises frustrated, to ruine them. *Doct.* 1. The Lords Church hath many enemies both open and secret, enemies standing yet unbroken, and these, who though they be broken, yet remain enemies; for, there is an *all of the Nations that come against Jerusalem*. 2. Albeit some, who persecute and oppose the Church of God, may finde mercy to come and joyne with her, and be saved: yet for the most part it is a token of so much displeasure, and so many former controversies against men, when they are left to themselves, to be persecutors, that their destruction only will end it; *I will destroy all the Nations*, &c. is the ordinary issue of their being enemies. 3. The Lord is not slack or remisse in avenging injuries done to the Church, but will do it as effectually, as men do their most serious affaires, when they bend their wits to devise means to carry it well on, and do pursue it to the uttermost: this is imported in that he will *seek to destroy all the Nations*, as is before explained.

Verse 10. *And I will poure upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son: and shall be*

in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-borne.

In the eighth promise, is held forth the future conversion and repentance of Israel: the full accomplishment whereof was not that which we read in the primitive times, *Act. 2.* but is yet to be accomplished, when all their families shall concur in this work, *v. 14.* which was not then fulfilled. The Lord promise:th unto the body of that people, that he will give unto them the Spirit of conversion and prayer, to help down their enemies, and repentance for their piercing of Christ, by consenting to their fathers deed, and by their reproaches against Christ and all Christians for his sake, during the time of their infidelity: and that this sorrow shall be sincere and vehement, as for an only son, or a first-borne. *Doct. 1.* Prayer is a special and effectual means of bringing down the Churches enemies: for, in that day that he seeks to destroy enemies, *v. 9.* this promise goeth along, *And I will poure upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications.* 2. Prayer for bringing down enemies is not the work of received habits and qualifications only, but must flow from the Spirit of God, who where he is given to any, is the gift of Gods free grace and favour, a pledge and worker of grace in them, and an assured token of Gods favour to them; for there is a Spirit of supplications, who also, being given for that end, is the Spirit of grace. 3. As all that any do by way of duty, in promoting their own happinesse, is but the fruit of Gods preventing grace, so are his dispensations of grace ample and liberal, like to the giver: for, when they supplicate, it is, because he furnisheth them by his Spirit so to do; and this Spirit is poured out in large measure. 4. It is not enough in times of strait, to supplicate God for help out of trouble, but guilt ought to be our greatest burden and exercise, and repentance for it joynd with our prayers: for, when they have the Spirit of supplications, they shall mourn. 5. Sin will then affect the heart most, when the wrong done to Christ by it is studied; and especially a true penitent will be most affected with any persecution of Christ in his members, whereof he hath been guilty: for so will it be with the converted Jewes, *They shall look on me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.* 6. A true penitent will be easily convinced, and will

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take with the guilt of that which they have been approvers of consenters, and upstirrers into, though others have acted it; for, the Jews will then reckon that *they pierced Christ*, though it was done by the hand of the *Romane* souldiers: yet, their posterity shall take with it, because of their consent to what their fathers did. 7. Repentance for sinne flowes from faith in Christ, and the faith of our interest in his sufferings; for *faith* Christ (who being God from eternity, doth here speak) *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourne*, which imports not only their considering that their fathers with wicked hands pierced, but their looking to him by faith; (as *Israel* did of old to the brazen serpent, *Nu. b. 21. 8, 9.*) as pierced for, and by their sinnes, even though they were such enemies, to purchase reconciliation for them, which will draw forth repentance. 8. As acceptable repentance for sinne ought to be sincere and reall without dissimulation, so kindly sorrow for it will come behinde no sorrow for any prejudice whatsoever: though sometimes spiritual sorrow may fall short in outward expression, as being above it, and so great, that to get it expressed were an ease; for, *They shall mourn for him*, (where the person is changed, God the Father speaking, or the Prophet in his name) *as one mourneth for his only sonne, &c.*

Verf. 11. *In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.*

The repentance of the converted Jews is further described, that it shall be a sorrow as vehement and solemn, as when all *Judah* by publick appointment lamented the death of *Josiah* in *Hadadrimmon*, near the valley of *Megiddon* where he was slaine, *2 Chron. 35. 22, 23, 24, 25.* and where it seems the lamentation begun. *Doct. 1.* Christ is indeed the soul and life of his Church and people, in whom their happinesse stands, so that injuries done to him, and piercing of him, and crucifying of him afresh, will produce sad lamentations from sensible souls: so was *Josiah* unto *Judah*, and therefore all of them lamented him, and so will converted *Judah* (and all the people of God should) reckon Christ to be, and will mourn for their piercing of him by their cruelty and sinnes. 2. It is not only lawfull, but neces-

fary, that a people under guiltiness, expresse their repentance in solemne fasts and humiliations, for mutual up-stirring to repentance, and for publick testification thereof; for, so will it be among the converted Jewes. *In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon, in the valley of Megiddon, where there were publick humiliations by solemne appointment, 2 Chron. 35. 25.*

Vers. 12. And the land shall mourne, every family apart; the family of the house of David apart, and their wives apart: the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart;

13. The family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart: the family of Shimei apart, and their wives apart.

14. All the families that remained, every family apart, and their wives apart.

It is further declared concerning this repentance, that it shall be universal among all the people, and all ranks, and that not only in a publick way, but also by private humiliations in families, of Rulers, and Teachers, who had been chief in the guilt of crucifying Christ, and of all other ranks, who should in their mourning shut up themselves from their wives; and other lawfull delights, as was the custome of the Jewes in mourning. The Rulers are signified by the house of David, and of Nathan a sonne of Davids, 2 Sam. 5. 14. whose posterity it seems, were in some eminency in this time: and the teachers are signified, by the house of Levi and of Shimei a sonne of Gershom the sonne of Levi, 1 Chron. 6. 17. whose posterity also seems to have been some way remarkable in Zechariahs time, and therefore particularly spoken of. *Doff. 1.* The conversion of the Jewes or Israel unto the Messiah, is not to be of some few only, but Nationall of the body of that people, and there will be real repentance among many of them; for, *All the land shall mourne, and all the families that remaine, men and their wives.* 2. True penitents will not satisfie themselves only with publick humiliations where custome and example may draw many; but will also make conscience of the duty in families, and where no eye

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but Gods seeth them; and will lay their own finnes and publick finnes particularly to heart, and bring home publick provocations to their own doores, no rank or degree excluding or freeing themselves; for, *Every family shall mourne apart, and their wives apart.* 3. As the Lord will have his own among eminent Rulers, so it is a desirable blessing, when Rulers and Teachers, who ordinarily have chief hand in publick provocations, do not draw back, but are eminent in the duty of repentance; for, so is here promised, *The family of the house of David; of Nathan, of Levi, of Shimei, shall mourne.* 4. In setting about the duty of repentance and humiliations, persons are not only to cast off sinfull distractions, but even to lay aside lawfull delights, that they may afflict their souls before the Lord; and seriously minde the duty; for, *The families shall mourne, and their wives apart.*

CHAP. XIII.

IN the first part of this Chapter, the spiritual blessings of the Gospel purchased by Christ are promised to the Church, especially to Israel; such is remission of finnes and holiness, *vers. 1.* Reformation of the Church; *vers. 2.* and zeal against false teachers; *v. 3.* some of whom (at least) shall be convinced of their way and quit it; *v. 4.* taking them to other callings, *v. 5.* and shall acknowledge the equity of severity used against them; *v. 6.* In the second part of the Chapter, there is a Prophecie of the suffering of Christ, and scattering of the visible Church, and his care of his own; *v. 7.* and that the greater part of the Church was to be cut off; and but a few to be preserved, *v. 8.* who being purged by afflictions, should increase in holiness, and in the sense of Gods favour toward them, *v. 9.*

VERS. 1. *I*N that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness.

There are several blessings and benefits of the Kingdome of Christ

Christ here promised, which as the godly Jewes before Christ did enjoy, though more darkly and in lesser measure then under the Gospel: for though they be the common priviledges of the Gospel Church, in every age, yet a more full accomplishment of them is reserved for the converted *Israelites*, and therefore are peculiarly promised for *that day* when they shall repent and be restored, as appears from the end of the preceding Chapter. The first benefit is, Remission of sinnes and sanctification, purging away the guilt of sinne, by the grace of God in forgiving sinnes through Christs blood, and the vertue of his blood applied by the Spirit, and laid hold upon by faith, for purging all uncleannesse of sinne: this is compared to a springing fountaine made open to all, in opposition to the small measure of water carried into the Temple for legall washings. This benefit will be very conspicuous toward converted *Israel*, when the Redeemer shall turne iniquity from Jacob, Rom. 11. 26.

Doff. 1. The great and chiefe priviledge of the Gospel is remission and purging of sinne, which as they are only attainable through faith laying hold on Christs blood, and the grace of God through him offered in the Gospel, so without these no other advantages by the Gospel will availe much, or be comfortable; for, it is the first here, *A fountaine for sinne, and uncleannesse*; or, *severation through uncleannesse*, pointing at all filthinesse of sinne, shadowed out by legall uncleannesse, causing men to be sequestered, and particularly at originall sinne, shadowed out by menstruous uncleannesse; for the purging whereof this fountaine also must be made use of. 2. The free grace of God only and lost man, and the vertue of Christs blood is a treasure inexhaustible; and which cannot be overcome with the greatness and multiplicity of sinne, in these who flee unto it; for, *it is a fountaine, or spring*. 3. Pardon, and vertue for purging of sinne is not only purchased, and the way to it made patent, by the death of Christ, giving access unto God through him: but is held forth in the offer of the Gospel and Ministry of the Word, that none may pretend ignorance, nor any who need it seclude themselves from so free an offer; and that the godly who have found the fruit of it, may come and daily make use of it: for, *it is a fountaine opened*. 4. As the greatest must be in Christs reverence for this benefit, even these who have greatest gifts and are Rulers of others; so the meanest in the Church, however they be not equal to others in gifts, yet have

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have a like interest with them in this saving benefit; for, it is opened to the house of David; or, Rulers who attend in Christs Courts, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, or body of the Church. 5. When the Lord poures out upon his people, the Spirit of repentance and humiliation, it is a forerunner of ample manifestations of the grace of God, in opening up the treasures of the Gospel by the Ministry of the Word, and in granting of pardon, and growth in purity; for, when the land shall mourn, Chap. 12. 10. In that day, there shall be a fountaine opened.

Verf. 2. *And it shall come to passe in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembred: and also I will cause the Prophets, and the unclean spirit to passe out of the land.*

A second benefit promised, is, Reformation of the Church from all superstition, idolatry, and corruption in worship, under the name of *Idols*, and from false Doctrine in removing of false teachers, and the unclean spirit that leads and acts them. This is accomplished in every reformed Church, by Doctrine and constitutions of Discipline according to the measure of their Reformation, but will more especially appear in the Church of *Israel*, when they are converted and restored. The Doctrine and Discipline of that Church shall cast out all Hereticks, Sectaries, and Schismaticks out of the land. *Doct. 1.* Gospel-Reformation consists not only in the internall purging away of sinne, but in the outward Reformation of Doctrine also, whereby Gods truth, and Ordinances, which he hath promised to be with, and to blesse for conversion and renowation of souls, are established and set up; for here, with the fountaine opened, such a Reformation is promised. 2. The Reformation of a Church is promoted and carried on, especially when the Spirit of repentance for sinne, and former deboardings from God is poured out upon a people; for, this Reformation goeth on in that day, when they are mourning, chap. 12. The neglect of this provokes God to reforme his Church rather by judgement

means then by such a merciful way. 3. Every corruption in the worship of God is an idol, in so farre as it is a device of mans own brain, and the deviler imagineth to himselfe a God, who will not approve of such worship, which certainly is not the true God: so it is here held out, *I will cut off Idols*. 4. Idolatry and superstition are so grievous in the eyes of a jealous God, so scandalous blemishes in his bride, and evils to which we have such an inclination by nature, as the least mixture of these with his worship cannot but dishonour God, and pollute the Church; and the very memorial of them, will be enough to draw us back to Apostasie; therefore in a right Reformation, *The names of idols are to be cut off, and to be no more remembred*, to wit, in any religious state especially. 5. Whatever false worship may seem to be, or promise, yet in effect it proves but matter of terrour and sorrow, when the worshipper stands in greatest need of comfort in his worship; for, so doth the name of *idols* (which in the Original is sorrowes, or, terrours) import. 6. Purity of worship and Doctrine must go together, all corrupt worship having false Doctrine at the root of it, and as corruption in worship ushers in heresie in Doctrine, so unsoundnesse in Doctrine flowing from an unsound heart, cannot consist with pure and acceptable worship; for here, *idols* and *Prophets*, or teachers of false Doctrine (who are here designed as they use to designe themselves) must go together. 7. Approven Reformation doth not only oppose the error by way of doctrinal declaration and refutation, but also the teacher of the error, by way of Discipline; for, where Doctrine is reformed, *The Prophet passeth out of the Land*. 8. False Doctrine and corrupt worship are accomplished with, and flow from, not only the polluted and corrupt heart and imaginations of men, but from a spirit of Satan, the father of lies, who contributes to make them have place in the world, among them who receive not the love of the truth, which spirit, how plausible soever, is not an harmlesse and innocent spirit, but an unclean spirit, working upon the vilest affections in men, to hatch and broach error, and oftentimes leading the erroneous person into blemishes in conversation, that in Gods wisdom the veile may be taken off their way; for, with the *Prophet*, there is an *unclean spirit* to passe out of the land in a time of Reformation. Hence it is that errors are called *the error of the wicked*, 2 Pet. 2. 17. and *are works of the flesh*, Gal. 5. 19, 20. and work on lusts and

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wantonnesse, 2. *Per.* 2. 18. See, 2 *Thes.* 2. 9. 9. It is the Lord who hath chief hand in the Churches Reformation, and to whom the glory thereof is due: it is he who prescribes the rule of Reformation, who cleares it up from his Word unto a people, who stirres them up to embrace it, and who by his Spirit makes it effectually, notwithstanding all opposition; for, *In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, I will cut off the names of idols, &c.*

Verf. 3. And it shall come to passe, that when any shall yet prophesie, then his father and his mother that begat him, shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live: for thou speakest lies in the Name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him, shall thrust him thorow when he prophesieth.

A third benefit (which is a branch of the former,) is zeal in the godly against false teachers, who shall be so tender, of the truth and glory of God, and the safety of the Church, (all which are endangered by error,) that it shall overcome natural affection in them; so that parents shall not spare their own children being seducers, but shall either by an heroick act (such as was in *Phinehas*, *Numb.* 25. 8.) themselves judge him worthy to die, and give sentence and execute it, or cause him to be punished, by bringing him to the Magistrate who hath power, according to the Law, *Deut.* 17. It is here promised, that this zeal shall be conspicuous in converted *Israel*. *Doct. 1.* Times of thoroughest reformation, will not want their own measure of opposition by some adhering unto, and persevering in their old corruptions: yea, it is ordinary, that in a time of Reformation, Satan will be let loose in false teachers, as intending thereby to scandalize all Reformation, but God intending hereby to make Reformation more pure, and truth the clearer because of opposition; for, when God is reforming, there will be *who shall yet prophesie*. 2. The toleration of a false Religion in Doctrine or worship, and the exemption of the erroneous from civil punishment, is no more lawful under the New Testament, then it was under the Old, it being no more lawfull to compell consciences (if so be that this be a compulsion, as men give it out) then, nor it is now; for, here is a Prophecie of the *Jayes of the New Testament*.

ment, alluding to the Law, *Deut. 13. 5, 6, 9. &c.* as being then to be in force. 3. The Lords promising and undertaking a work of Reformation, and the suppressing of error and idolatry, ought to be no hindrance to Magistrates and others in their stations, to suppress what may hinder Reformation, but rather an encouragement unto them, having such ground of hope that their endeavours shall be successfull; for, though God promise to bring about this Reformation, *v. 2.* yet it is foretold that they shall do their duty, *v. 3.* A Magistrates duty is no more inconsistent with the promise that Reformation shall be Gods work, then Ministers preaching against error is, both of them being means whereby God accomplisheth his promise. 4. Albeit that all erroneous persons stand guilty before the Lord, yet his controversie is specially against seducers and false teachers, unto whom punishment is specially due from the civil Magistrate; for it is, *They who prophesie*, that are to be punished. 5. Zeal for God is very lawfully and warrantably employed against error, as well as against prophanity; and dearest relations and natural affections ought to give place unto it, it being cruelty to suffer these we affect to lose their own souls, and the souls of others; for, *When any shall yet prophesie, then his father and his mother that begat him, shall say unto him, thou shalt not live.* 6. It is not enough nor a sufficient testimony of zeal in Magistrates, to suppress and punish erroneous persons, when they do by their Doctrine and practices disturb the civil peace of the State, but their wronging of the truth of God, corrupting of souls food, poisoning them with lies instead of truth, and wronging of the God of truth by fathering of a lie upon him, ought to stirre up zeal to take order with them; for, this is the reason of the sentence, *Thou shalt not live, for thou speakest lies in the Name of the Lord.* 7. Some errors are so eminently blasphemous, and some persons so eminently engaged in venting and promoting of them, as in Gods account, calls for the death of the seducers; for, of some Prophets and Prophecies it is said, *Thou shalt not live, and they shall thrust him through.*

Vers. 4. And it shall come to passe in that day, that the Prphets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied: neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive.

Vers. 5.

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5. But he shall say, I am no Prophet, I am an husbandman: for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.

A fourth benefit, flowing from the two former of Reformation and zeal of the godly, appears upon some of seducers themselves, who through the clearnesse and abundance of the true Doctrine, and of knowledge, and observing the severity used against some, shall be convinced in conscience of the error of their way, and shall willingly cease from deceiving the people, and from their accustomed counterfeiting of holinesse, they shall lay aside the habit used by true Prophets in signe of sobriety, 2 Kings 1: 8. *Mat. 3. 4.* whereby they had deluded the people, and they shall renounce the Profession, and take them to their wonted callings, which they had left to turn deceivers, and to live idly. *Doct.* 1. How strong and taking soever error be, yet truth is infinitely stronger, and can prevaile over it, and convince and confound the greatest opposite that ever he should have been against it; for, *In that day the Prophets shall be ashamed, every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied.* 2. Errors and erroneous wayes, are not to be lightly, and without remorse abandoned, (as if it were but a change of judgement,) but with deep conviction of conscience, and shame of face, as for other scandalous sins; for, *the Prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision.* 3. Civil powers, their suppressing and punishing erroneous persons and seducers, is not a meanes to make men turn hypocrites: but being joyned with due conviction, may be blessed with reclaiming of them indeed; for, this conviction renouncing hypocritical shewes, and acknowledging their error, speaks so much at least in some of them. 4. As it is usual for Saran and false teachers to delude the world, under fairest pretexts of holinesse and mortification; so it shall adde to the conviction and repentance of the truly convinced, that they have covered so vile a course with so faire a vail; for, *as they did wear a rough garment to deceive,* so they shall not do it any more when they are convinced. 5. When God convinceih and wakeneth the consciences of seducers, and of unfaithful teachers, it will be sad and grievous unto them, that they did run without a calling, and did undertake a charge, for which they were not fitted, and they will be ready to subscribe to their

their own sentence and ejection; for, they shall say, *I am no Prophet, I am an Husbandman*: imports not only that they shall be convinced, that they wanted a calling to that office, but that they shall judge themselves more fit for the Plough than the Pulpit. 6. As it is a great iniquity for men whom Providence hath settled in a lawful calling, to leave it, and at their own hand turn teachers, and as this is the means to breed many errors in a Church, when all the Congregation will be holy, and think that teachers take too much upon them: so a chiefe cause why men turne and continue seducers and false teachers, is unwillingnesse to be at pains for their livelihood in a lawful calling, which they think to gaine more easily that way: this is it which makes *Husbandmen, bred to keep caviel from their youth*, quit their calling, and pretend to prophesying, which as it made many teachers of lies, so they will see it, and confesse it to be a great sin, when God speaks to their consciences.

Verse 6. And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer: Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.

This benefit and effect upon false teachers is further declared, in that they shall not only relinquish their deceiving, and take them to their old employment, but when any shall enquire what the prints of inferiour chastisements, that had been inflicted upon them who escaped death, meane, (which however they might be hid on the rest of their body, yet were visible on their naked hands) They shall justifie the censure, and acknowledge that the inflictors, (whether their Parents, v. 3. or Judges,) were friends and not enemies. *Doct. 1.* That the Spirit of God is not here prophesying of spiritual censures, and the Churches piercing of seducers with threatenings of eternal wrath, but is foretelling of civil corporal punishments, is clear from this Scripture; for, there will be *wounds in the hands*, which are visible, and occasion questions from others. 2. It is not the Will of God that all errors be alike severely censured, nor all seducers punished alike, but that the punishment be proportioned to the error, and to mens obstinacy in main-
taining

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taining, and activity in promoting them; for, of these Prophets some were *not to live*, v. 3. others lesse guilty, or more penitent are chastened only, and escape with *wounds in their bands*. 3. As it is a great kindnesse to any, to use all lawfull meanes, how severe soever, to reclaim them from errour: so themselves, whenever they finde grace to repent, will account it so, whatever may be their apprehensions in the time of their wandering; for, *Then shall be answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.*

Verse 7. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hostes: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turne mine hand upon the little ones.

The Lord having foretold this happinesse to come upon the Church, especially on converted *Israel*: and lest the godly should over-rejoyce because of this dream of a constant gale of prosperity: therefore he subjoyns a prophecie of the sufferings of Christ, the afflictions of the godly, and the purging of the visible Church by judgements, ere all this Reformation, especially of *Israel*, were brought about. This prophecie hath its chief and first accomplishment in Christs person, his disciples, and the visible Church of the Jewes after his death, but may be extended also to point out the lot of Pastors, and particular members of the visible Church in all ages.

In this part of the prophecie, Christs sufferings are foretold, in a charge given to affliction or persecution, (signified by the sword) to assaile and smite Christ for the sins of his people, according to the passion past in the Covenant of Redemption. Upon which it is foretold, that the flock shall be scattered, (whereof an external symbole was the flight of his disciples, *Mat. 26. 31.* but was more fully accomplished in the dispersion of the Jewes after his death,) and that in that scattering God would have a care of his own, who are little in their own eyes, would preserve them, and change his dealing toward them, as was verified in his recollecting and
strength-

strengthening his scattered disciples, and preserving of his own among the Jewes. *Doct.* 1. The Church of Christ is not to dream of flourishing and triumphing dayes, but to be fitted for what is promised her by trouble, and to have them seasoned when they come with trouble; so much doth the seasoning of former promises, with these predictions of the sufferings of Christ and his servants, as if they were false teachers, import. 2. It is no sufficient argument to hinder the Church and Christian Magistrates zeal in punishing error, that the faithful servants of Christ are oft-times under persecution for truth, the one being the Churches duty, which may not be omitted without sin; the other, her affliction only; for, it is nothing the lesse a mercy to have false prophets thrust through, v. 3. that sometime the sword is drawn against Christ and his followers. 3. Christ incarnate is the good and faithful shepherd of his flock, who willingly gave his life for his sheep, who was obedient to his Father unto death, served him in the work of Redemption, and who in his office is approved and accepted of him, and lost none of his Fathers respects by his afflictions; for, the Father acknowledges him *my shepherd*. 4. Christ in one person is both God and man, being true man as incarnate, and true God in his divine nature dwelling by the personal union in the humane nature, equal with the Father, because of the same essence, though in respect of his office and voluntary dispensation, he be inferiour; for, he is *the man that is my fellow, equal, or companion*, saith the Lord of hostes. 5. The sufferings of Christ, (and consequently of all his followers) are over-ruled by the effectual Providence of God, so that nothing is done to him without the Fathers consent, who yet is free of the sins of all instruments employed in afflicting him, who were about another thing in that work then the Father approved of: for, it is God who commands *the sword to awake, and smite the shepherd*. 6. Christ is the Chieftain and Ring-leader of all the Churches sufferers, who in his own person hath paved the way to his followers, and tried the swords, and who by his interest and sympathie, chiefly suffers in the sufferings of his people: for, the sword assayes him first, *Smite the shepherd*. 7. When the Lord sends troubles upon the visible Church, the Pastors and Watchmen are to resolve for hardest measure, as being Satans greatest eye-sores, and they who ought to confirm others by their sufferings; for, as this was verified in Christ,

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so also at other times trouble ordinarily begins at *Smite the shepherd*. 8. Trouble is a very terrifying thing when it comes to a pinch, and may affright those who thought themselves very stout, and make them shrink if there be any way to shun it; for, so did appear in the accomplishment of this prophecie, in the disciples flight. 9. Albeit it be Satans policie to cause men to undervalue Pastors, and look upon them as burdens, which the Church would be the better to want; yet their trouble prognosticates trouble to come on the Church, their death, exile or imprisonment scatters the visible society of the Church; for, this is of eternal verity, as well as in the disciples flight; *Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered*. 10. It is an especial preface of the Churches scattering by the losse of Pastors, when they themselves have an hand in the persecuting of Pastors; for, so was this accomplished on the Church of the Jewes, they smote Christ who was their shepherd, and therefore were justly scattered themselves. 11. Saddest afflictions do not seclude the elect and faithful from Christ and his Fathers care; but that he will moderate and change his dealing toward them, when afflictions are universal and sore; for, as while Christ was suffering in his humane nature; he ceased not to work in his divine nature, and to care for his own disciples and followers: so in all ages he (being raised from the dead) and his Father with him, *doth turne his hand up- on the little ones*, or give them a renewed proof of his love; in recovering them after their scattering, and in preserving them by his tender care under common calamities, after they had been left to themselves to get a proof of their own frailty. 12. It is an evidence of Christs flock, and of these that he cares for in trouble, that they are humble and little in their own eyes; and that their afflictions contribute to make them so more and more; for, they are *the little ones*.

Verf. 8. *And it shall come to passe, that in all the land; with the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off and die, but the third shall be left therein.*

9. *And I will bring the third part thorow the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call upon my Name,*

and I will heare them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

In this next part of the Prophecie, we have the further exposition of the flocks scattering, in respect of the several sorts of dispositions in it, there being a generality (signified by two parts) who are ordinarily naughty, these are to be cut off and destroyed, and only a remnant, or *third part* left, who yet should not be free of affliction to purge away their dross, that they may be more fervent in Gods service, and in getting proofs of Gods hearing their prayers, and of his love intimated unto them, they may increase in faith and confidence. This was accomplished, not only on the Nation of the Jewes, but in all ages is to be seen in the visible Church, when he sets up his fire in it. *Doff.* 1. As the visible Church is for ordinary so mixed, as that the generality thereof is unsound, and not answerable to their obligations: so it is righteous with God, to send trials and judgements upon her, whereby he purgeth her of such dross, and cuts them off, who living in his house, will not submit to his yoke; for, *in all the land, two parts shall be cut off, and die.* 2. In times of Gods saddest judgements upon the visible Church, as God will have a special care of his own children, so useth he to preserve a remnant toward whom to shew mercy; for, *the third part shall be left therein.* 3. Albeit the Lord reserve a remnant to himself, yet he will not alwayes free them from tasting of so much affliction and calamity as may exercise them; for, *I will bring the third part through the fire.* 4. The Lords end in letting out affliction upon his own is not to destroy them, but to give them a proof of themselves, and to purge them from their dross, and make them better, and by this testifie his estimation of them: for, *I will refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried.* The meaning of which similitude is not, that they shall be purged from all their dross, or, that they can abide such a furnace, as silver or gold *Isa.* 48. 10. but that (as these precious metalls) they have some dross, which cannot be discovered or purged but by some searching trials: that they shall not prove chaffe, stubble or dross in the furnace, but have some mettal, which shall be preserved and shine the brighter; and that God by taking this

pains

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pains on them, declares that he accounts them his treasure, and precious mettall. 5. It is a sweet evidence of a peoples profiting under the rod, and being purged of dross, when their zeal in Gods worship, their need of him, and delight in calling on his Name, is encreased; for, *they shall call on my Name*. 6. When the Lord blesteth his people with fruitfulness under affliction, and puts them to employ him much, it is a pledge that God will heare their prayers, and shed abroad the sense of his love in their hearts, assuring them of an interest in him; for, *I will bless them, I will say, It is my people*. 7. As faith and the increase of it, enabling men boldly to profess it before God and the world, is a choice Gospel-blessing, and a rich recompence of much affliction: so Gods preventing grace and kindness toward his people when they seek him, especially under affliction, is such, as may invite them to make him their portion, and give them warrant, confidently to rest and relie on him; for, upon his bearing, and saying, *It is my people, they shall say, The Lord is my God*.

CHAP. XIV.

IN this Chapter there is a continuation of the prophetic begun, in the end of the former chapter, wherein an account is given of the case of the Church, from this Prophets time to the end of the world, in these particulars. 1. The destruction of Jerusalem, with the judgement and mercy in that stroke, *v. 1, 2*. 2. It is cleared, that the instruments of this stroke should not go unpunished, *v. 3*. nor the Church perish by this stroke, for the way of salvation should be made clear unto the Gentiles, *v. 4*. to which the elect Jewes should joyn, *v. 5*. 3. It is foretold, that the condition of the Church and Blest under the dayes of the Gospel, shall be unsettled and mixed of variety of dispensations, yet so as in end, and when men would least expect, it should prove better, *v. 6, 7*. 4. It is fore-prophe-
sed, that the doctrine of salvation, and the refreshments fol-
lowing

lowing, thereupon, shall spread to all parts of the world, v. 8, whereby Christ shall get an universal Kingdom, wherein there shall be unity, v. 9. 5. A particular promise is made of the exaltation, restitution and safety of converted *Israel*, v. 10, 11. 6. There is a threatening of judgement against the enemies of the Church, that they shall be cut off, v. by a consumption v. 12, by intestine discord, v. 13, by the hand of the Church, v. 14, and that the stroke shall reach all means they had employed against the Church, v. 15. 7. There is a promise of the Conversion of many of the enemies who are relieved, v. 16, and it not, that visible judgement sh^{all} pursue them yet more, v. 17, 18, 19. Lastly, there is a promise of the holiness and purity of the Church, v. 20, 21.

Verse 1. **B**ehold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoils shall be divided in the midst of thee.

The chapter begins with a more clear prediction of the destruction of *Jerusalem* then before, wherein God being Judge and Avenger of his S^{on}s blood which they should shed, would bring a day of special vengeance upon that city, putting it wholly in the power of enemies, who, without fear of ambush or surprisal, should divide the spoiles of the city in the midst of it: and by this doctrine he cleareth what had been said, chap. 13. 8. of cutting off two parts, and leaving a third part. *Dott.* 1. It is the Churches advantage to be ordinarily warned of a stroke before it come, that she wisely considering Gods judgement, may labour to prevent or prepare for it; that she godly be not surprized with such a judgement when it comes; and that God may be justified, if he make them feel justice, who will not believe truth speaking it; therefore are they excited to consider this approaching judgement; *Behold, the day cometh.* 2. The Lord is chief and supreme in all the Churches calamities, he it is who executeth his Word by them; who pleads his controversies, and who, however he be but little seen or regarded in the visible Church, yet by his judgements will be discovered to be *Jehovah* the Lord; for, *the day of the Lord cometh.* 3. It is one evidence of divine displeasure, wherein God is to be

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be seen, when enemies get power over the substance of his people; (in pursuing after which God is oft-times forgotten) and do without fear of any, dispose thereof at their pleasure; for, it is the day of the Lord, wherein he is seen, when the spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.

Vers. 2. For I will gather all Nations against Jerusalem to battel, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and halfe of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

This calamity is further described, from both the severity and moderation that shall be in it. The Lord was to gather the Romane army, (consisting of many Nations, subject unto them, and confederate with them) against Jerusalem, and to deliver the city into their hands, that houses might be pillaged, and women ravished; and yet he would not utterly destroy that Nation, for some of them should be preserved by going into captivity, and others should leave it before the time of the siege, (as the Christians who went to Pel'a) and so should not be cut off from the city, or from that Nation, whereof the city was a part. *Doff.* 1. There is not a motion or enterprise among men in the world, especially about the Church; but God hath a sovereign hand in it, and is by them carrying on purposes which they little minde; for the Romane armies coming against Jerusalem, is Gods deed to avenge his Sons death; I will gather all Nations against Jerusalem to battel. 2. As the Lord hath not a few, but all Nations at his command, to put them in subjection to whom he will; and to be employed as he pleaseth: so many of them are employed against the Church, that he may bring many witnesses to the pleading of his controversy, and may discover to her her folly, in provoking him to give her into the hands of these who formerly hated her, but could not prevaile because of his protection; for, all Nations are put under the Romanes by him, and gathered against Jerusalem. 3. It is no strange thing to see enemies prevail against the Church, when God is pursuing a controversy with her; nor, when

when she rejects Christ, corrupts his worship, sheds righteous blood, is given to covetousnesse, injustice, luxury, &c. and is obstinate in all these, to see God quire overthrow and overturn her, and make her a spectacle of sad judgements; for such were the sins of Jerusalem, and for these, *The cities shall be taken, houses rifled, and the women ravished.* Therefore other Churches may expect the same measure, if they provoke God, and being under calamitie, are to be thankful in so far as they come short of this stroak. 4. Every one ought to submit and prepare for what God may carve out as their share of a common calamity, according as in his wisdom he thinks fit, without complaining or being otherwise dealt with then others: for, the city being taken, there is death of which no mention is made here) *ri-fing of houses, captivity,* and (which is worse then death) *ra-vishing of women,* when husbands and parents are not able to defend their wives and children, of which some tasted of one, some of more, as God saw fit. 5. The Lord can so season saddest dispensations to his people, and set bounds to over-flowing trouble, as even when they seem bitterest, some mercy may be in the bosome of them; for, not only was this fatal stroak a mercy, in that it was a clear demonstration that the Messiah was come, in that their Common-wealth was quite abolished, and their Ceremonial worship put to a close, the Temple being destroyed: but yet further mercy appears, in that that Nation is not quite cut off, but a part reserved for future mercy; *a residue not cut off from the city.* Which as it was literally true in *Antio-chus* invasion before Christ, that some were left in the city, so under the Romanes, some of that Nation and City escaped the siege and these calamities. 6. The Lord may convey purposes of mercy in a sad time, through very sad dispensations, which at first view would seem to promise no such thing; for, as this mercy of being preserved, was granted to some in escaping the siege, so others were reserved to be a seed of that Nation by their captivity into strange Nations: *Halfe of the people shall go forth into captivity,* is both a calamity, and yet a mercy to that Nation.

Verse 3. *Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those Nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.*

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In the next part of this prophetic, the Lord clears some difficulties that might arise upon the hearing of this sad judgement; And first, it might be enquired what shall become of these so cruel enemies? to which, answer is here made, that they should not escape unpunished, but God should appear and fight against them, as ever he did at any time for his Church, and his fighting imports successe; this the Romans and these Consecraters felt in many calamities, since that time till now.

Doct. 1. No affliction of the Church for her provocations, nor yet Gods seeming to hide himself, will hinder him from testifying his affection to her, or from being her enemies party in due time, and to embarque in her quarrel, and engage his power for revenge; for, *the Lord shall go forth and fight against these Nations.* 2. Albeit the Lord by his secret Providence do so order affaires, as that the Churches enemies do nothing but execute his quarrel; yet they are to expect no thanks for their service against his Church, at minding nothing lesse therein then the execution of Gods will, but they may rather reckon that they are permitted to go on in that service to ripen them for vengeance; for, though the Lord gathered them, *v. 2.* yet now, *he will fight against them* 3. The Churches low estate may be a time of greater mercies, at least as to his reckoning with her enemies, then when she is most flourishing; for, then, when Jerusalem is destroyed, albeit he do not yet restore them, yet *he will go forth and fight against their enemies.* 4. All the Churches experiences in former times, are forth-coming for the Churches comfort in after-ages, according as she shall need them, and as the Lords wisdom seeth fit to improve them; for, *he shall fight as when he fought in the day of bartel*, which is not to be restricted to any one particular experience or time, but generally to be understood of all or any experience, which may seeme most comfortable in this or that strait.

Verse 4. *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the East, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, toward the East, and toward the West, and there shall be a very great valley, and*

*halfe of the mountain shall remove toward the North
and halfe of it toward the South.*

A second question might arise upon the hearing of this judgement; what should become of the Church, when *Jerusalem* is gone, the Temple burnt, and that Nation cut off or scattered? To which, answer is given, that the Church should not perish, for God should reveal the doctrine of salvation, and make a plain way for the Gentiles to come unto the Church, in place of the Jewes, and to worship him according to his will from afar off. Thus do I take up this dark speech, without troubling myself with other expositions: for the clearing whereof, consider, that the City *Jerusalem* was encompassed with hills, *Pf. 125. 2.* (whereof this Mount of Olives was one,) so that it was not seen afar off, nor the way to it easie. Whereby was signified, that under the Law, the Church and way to heaven was hid up from the rest of the world, being not only dark to the Jewes in respect of many ceremonies, but these ceremonies were a partition-wall, betwixt the Gentiles and the Church; so that the turning of that hill into a plaine valley, imports, that God should make the Church, and way of his worship clear to them afar off, that they might look there-away, as of old they did to the Temple, *1 Kings 8. Dan. 6.* (testifying their worshipping God, as he had prescribed and revealed himself,) and that he would remove impediments in the way of their Conversion, and make a plain way without ceremonies for them to come unto the Church. In this dark speech the Mount of Olives is only mentioned, though there were other hills about *Jerusalem*, because of an external symbole of this prophetic, accomplished on that Mount: when Christ ascending into heaven from off this Mount, gave Commission to his Apostles to carry the Gospel into all parts of the world, *Acts 1. 8.* — *12.* and upon his Ascension poured out his Spirit, and so did make the Church notor, and the way to it conspicuous and easie through the world. As for the valleyes lying Eastward and Westward, and the parts of the cleft Mount going to the North and the South, it is not curiously to be dipped in; for the parts of it were to go somewhere, and it may be thus conceived, that through all the world, (the large extent whereof is ordinarily taken up from East to West, *Psal. 103. 12* and

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and 113. 3.) the Church shall be conspicuous, or rather, because the City lay to the West of the Mount, the two parts of it behoved to go that way to North and South, and not to overthrow the city, which would overturn the scope of the figure. *Doct.* 1. No commotions and overturnings in the visible Church, will deprive Christ of a Church and people, he will finde a way to get a people amongst these who are little thought of, when these who account themselves the children of the Kingdom are cast out, for so are we taught here. 2. The opening up of the way of salvation, is God and Christs owne work, who by his preventing power and grace, overturns mountaines of impediments, to bring the light of salvation unto men, and make it have place with them; for, *His feet standing on the Mount of Olives, makes it cleave and be a valley.* 3. The accesse and Conversion of the Gentiles unto the Church, is a work of glorious power and grace, in effectuating which, mountaines were cleft, partition walls broken down, &c. and here it is prophesied of as an altering in part of the course of nature, and turning hills in valleys. 4. It takes away all ground of excuse from the children of men, that Christ hath purchased a clear right to all Nations indifferently, to whom the offer is made to come to him, and hath laid out a plain, clear, and comfortable way wherein to come; for, now the city hedged in with mountaines, is made patent to all, and mountaines in the way are turned in great valleys.

Verse 5. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountaines: for the valley of the mountaines shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee like as ye fled from before the earth-quake in the dayes of Uzziah King of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the Saints with thee.

It is further foretold in answer to the question, that the way to the Church, and of worship and salvation being made clear without ceremonies, and patent to all, as a valley made of the divided mountain, the Elect among the Jewes who should escape these calamities should seek unto the same with the Gentiles. Unto which prediction is added, that *this valley shall reach*

reach unto Azel, a word which signifies any thing that is *separate*, or, *set apart*, either by election, and so it points at the Church figured by Mount *Sion*, which is chosen of God, or by sequestration, and putting far off, and so it points at the Gentiles, who before were separated from the Church, as by a partition-wall, unto whom this valley or way of salvation shall reach, excepting such as are yet on *Azel*, that is, sequestered by Gods decree of reprobation: and thus taking both together, it agrees to what is said of the Elect Jewes, they shall joyne with the Gentiles, for then the partition-wall shall be taken down, and no difference shall be betwixt Jew and Gentile, they being cut off from the exercise of ceremonies and use of the Temple, and however they will be scattered far off from the Holy Land, yet that valley shall reach them, and at that distance they shall see *Zion*, and may worship God with the Gentiles that are as far off. It is further added, that they shall *flee as before an earthquake*, that was memorable among the Jewes; (of which we hear no more, but that it is pointed at *amos* 1. 1. It may be it was when *Habakuk* presumed to offer incense,) whereby may be pointed out their fleeing out of the land, because of the judgements on them to destroy the Temple, and make way for their joyning in the Christian Religion with the Gentiles; but it rather holds out their fleeing from the wrath to come, being moved by the power of the Gospel, whereby this mountaine was divided, and so overturned all as an earthquake. *Doct.* 1. The Gospel-way of salvation, and the way of Gods worship is purchased by Christ, and revealed to the Church, not for contemplation only, but for practice and use-making; for, *Ye shall flee to the valley*. 2. Under the Gospel, the Jewes have no special privilege of a peculiar way of worship and salvation, but are to joyne with the Gentiles, to walk in that new and living way; for, *Ye shall flee to the valley that reacheth to Azel*, or them that were separated. 3. No distinction of persons, nor distance of place doth seclude any from the offer of the Gospel, nor from communion with Christ in his Church, if they embrace it; for, *the valley shall reach to Azel*, or these who are separated at a great distance, and it shall reach back again to *Azel*, or, the chosen mountaine, they shall see *Zion* in that valley at greatest distance, to direct their service to God dwelling there, according as they did toward the Temple. 4. Albeit the distinction of Nations be removed under the Gospel, yet grace is not uni-

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universal then, inſomuch as the meanes of grace are not offered to all, at leaſt in one age; for, ſo alſo is there ſtill an *Axal*, or ſome ſeparate place where this valley ends. See, *Ezech. 47. 11.* 5. The power of the Goſpel, ſetting forth Chriſt, overturning mens excellencies and prerogatives, diſcovering ſin and wrath for ſin, will let men ſee as much cauſe to flee to Chriſt, and to embrace the way of ſalvation, as for men to avoid the moſt terrible accidents in the world; for, when by the Goſpel the mountaine ſhall cleave, and the valley be made, and Jew and Gentile ranked as equal, notwithstanding all the Jewes Prerogatives; then, *Ye ſhall flee like as ye fled from before the earthquake, in the dayes of Uziah King of Judah.*

Unto theſe predictions the Prophet ſubjoynes a Conclusion, *and the Lord my God ſhall come, &c.* which may be diverſly conſidered, and explained with relation to the former predictions. As, 1. By way of confirmation, that theſe things concerning the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and of her enemies, and the propagation of the Goſpel ſhould come to paſſe, becauſe God had undertaken to come and fulfil them, having Angels or other fitted instruments, (ſanctified or ſet apart by him,) to effectuate his purpoſes; and ſo it teacheth, 1. It beleeves the people of God to ſet to their ſeal, and believe that what he hath undertaken will be effectual, he having instruments and means at his command, and it is a part of the homage they owe to him, not only not to miſbelieve, but not to reſt on a general aſſent, but to rouse up themſelves to cloſe ſtedfaſtly with the Word, and reſt on it as a thing certain: for, thus doth the Prophet conclude, believing, *the Lord my God ſhall come, and all the Saints.* 2. However a believer may finde little comfort of the Word, looking to probability, or to a miſ-believing miſ-regarding world, yet it will prove a rich treaſure when he keeps communion with God, and hath converſe with him, and ſtudies to hold up every word (eſpecially promiſes) by way of thankful acknowledgement to him; ſo doth the Prophet turn his ſpeech to God, ſhewing whence his faith got life, — *and all the Saints with thee.* Secondly, this Conclusion may be conceived with ſpecial relation to the laſt promiſe of enlargement of the Goſpel Church, and that Chriſt was to come in the fleſh to effectuate this, and to be ſpiritually preſent in his Church, whither all his Eleſt ſhould be gathered, as his Attendants to wait on him, which

which doth so affect the Prophet, that he speaks it over in a confident acknowledgement, as one affected in believing it. And so it teacheth, 1. The Lord bestowes upon his people, not only things present that are refreshful but also the hope of future mercies unto the Church, which will comfort in present sad times; for, the Prophet here is refreshed with what was to come. 2. Of all the sweet thoughts and sights within time, the estate of the Gospel-Church is the best, especially where there is much Conversion, and Christ and his train coming to the Church; for, this ravisheth the Prophets heart: *The Lord my God shall come, and all the Saints.* 3. As Saints coming in to the Church is an evidence that Christ is there, who draws, and as the Churches husband beguets them; so it is an evidence of yet further manifestations of him, wherewith to entertain these his friends; for, when *the Saints come, he comes* also, and they with him: every Convert helps to bring yet more of Christs presence to the whole. 4. Christ and choicest Gospel-mercies cannot relish to any, but such as have an interest themselves in them: and such as are affected with the happiness of the Church, and mercies shewed to her, may take that as a mark that they have an interest, and that they may call Christ their God; so doth the Prophets stile teach us, it would not have so warmed his heart, nor could he have discerned this glory, if he had not had warrant to say, *The Lord my God shall come.* 5. Christs excellency being studied, especially by them who have interest in him, and his kinde manifestations to his people, cannot but ravish hearts, and draw them to delight in conversing with him; for, the Prophet beginning to speak of him, must close with speaking to him; *All the Saints with thee.* Thirdly, we may yet conceive the words as looking further to the second coming of Christ, thoughts whereof being represented to the Prophet, (as being the close and consummation of these Gospel-dispensations, hastening upon the back of them, and in some measure shadowed out by them,) doth yet more refresh him in thinking upon the dayes of the Gospel: this interpretation is but a further enlargement of the former, and may well consist with it: And teacheth us further, 1. As the dayes of the Gospel are the latter dayes, bordering upon eternity; so whatever the godly finde of Gospel-mercy within time, yet their full comfort is laid up for them in eternity; yea, the more they finde here, the more will they minde that, and what is want-

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wanning here, is richly made up there: therefore the Prophet steps from the one to the consideration of the other, to make the refreshment full. 2. It is a refreshful thing for one who hath interest in Christ, to think now on his second coming, and it shall be so afterward to see it, when the excellencie of Christ their Head shall be fully revealed, in his appearing as *Jehovah*, in his own and his Fathers glory, when he shall come attended with all his glorious Angels, and all his Saints, in whom he will be admired and glorified, when he shall testifie his love and respect in coming again the second time to fetch up his Bride, and when the poor believer shall fully finde the fruit of interest in him, and his being his God, and shall for ever enjoy the company of Christ and his followers, where none but Angels and Saints are; all this is imported in this ravishing meditation, *The Lord my God shall come, and all the Saints with thee.*

Verse 6. And it shall come to passe, in that day that the light shall not be clear nor dark.

7. But it shall be one day, which shall be known to the LORD, not day nor night, but it shall come to passe that at evening-time it shall be light.

The Lord by his Prophet having cleared these difficulties, concerning the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and foretold the enlargement of the Church under the Gospel, doth now more fully clear up the condition of the dayes of the Gospel. So the third part of the Prophecie is a prediction of the condition of the Elect and Church of the Gospel, during the whole tract of time, under the notion of *one day*, or tract of Providence, that it should be unsettled and mixed, as a dark day, till toward the evening of that day, or the close of time, at which time it should be light. *Dock. 1.* As the condition and state of the Gospel Church, is to continue till the end of time; so are we to look on the time thereof as short, and hastning toward eternity: In both these respects, it is called *one day*, or tract of Providence, though having divers periods of morning and evening, in regard there is no change of administra-

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tion of the Covenant, or way of worshipping God, to be any more expected under it, as was before; when the Ceremonial Law was abolished: and in regard of the shortness of the time, not only in respect of the life of particular persons, but of the whole time till the second coming of Christ, being compared with the time expired before, and therefore the very dawning of this day is called *the last dayes, and end of the world.* See, *Heb. 1. 2. 1 Pet. 1. 20. 1 John 2. 18. 1 Cor. 10. 11.*

2. Though the condition of the dayes of the Gospel be far above the dayes of the Law, yet the Church and godly are not to expect sealed happinesse, but to have an unsettled, uncertain, mixt condition of light and darknesse, truth and error, comforts and afflictions, and discouragements, clouds and Sun-blends, thriving together, and succeeding after other; for, so is imported in that *the light shall not be thoroughly clear,* (or, *precious*) *nor dark,* or *thoroughly mixed,* where by *preciousness* we are not to understand *scarcity,* (things precious being rare,) as if the light should neither be scarce nor thick, but a bright light constantly: for, not only doth *preciousness,* spoken of light, signifie the brightness of it, as *Job 31. 26.* in the Original, but the seventh verse clears this to be the meaning, where in the Original, it is not, *it shall not be day and night,* that is, a vicissitude of day and night, but still day, but thus, *not day, and not night,* that is, neither a clear day, nor yet dark night. This condition of the Church may be more sensible and visible toward the end, and before the evening of this day, as is foretold, *1 Tim. 4. 1. 2 Tim. 3. 1.* but yet it hath had its own verity in all the periods of it, since the first dawning of this day. 3. It may be an encouragement to the Church and godly, in their uncertain and unsealed condition, that they are but mixed, that hevie afflictions and discouragements want not comforts to make them tolerable, that no errors get truth banished, and that light is not wanting, wherein men may work and walk; for, as *the light is not clear,* (so it is not *thick*) *dark,* as it is *not day* in regard of some darknesse, so it is *not night,* in regard of some light and consolations, which should not be small with us. And in this respect the dayes of the Gospel, how mixed soever, are still *a day,* as differing from a Sun-set, and dark night of total ignorance, ceremonies, discouragement, &c. 4. As the determining of times continuance after the promulgation of the Gospel, is by the Father kept in his own hand,

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so it may be an encouragement, to endure the various conditions of these times, that they will be but short, be what they will: for, *It is one day known to the Lord*, that is, known to him, how long it shall continue; *Mat. 24. 36.* yet this is known to all, that it shall be (at least to every one in particular) but short as one day. 5. It is a further encouragement to the Gospel-Church, that all her lots are of Gods carving out, and that he hath an especial eye and providence upon her dark times for her good: for, thus also is the *day known to the Lord*, carved out and cared for, and seen to by him. 6. It may yet further encourage, that the Churches saddest times shall end in light and comfort: *It shall be light*: that this light shall come, when looking to all probability, we might expect more darknesse, as at evening time, when the Sun sets, and light removes; and especially this may encourage, that toward the end of the dayes of the Gospel, especially when all *Israel* and the fullnesse of the Gentiles shall be converted, there will be a time of light, comfort and ease; for, *at the evening-time of this day, it shall be light*, which is not to be understood absolutely, that there should be no mixture then, but comparatively, in respect of former times; for, tribulations shall be immediately before his second coming, *Mat. 24. 29.*

Ver. 8. *And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem: halfe of them toward the former sea, and halfe of them toward the hinder sea: in Summer and in Winter shall it be.*

The fourth part of this Prophecie, contains a prediction of the spiritual graces of the Gospel, whereby the darknesse of the times are counterbalanced, and made to shine with some light. In summe thus, the doctrine of salvation, containing all Gospel refreshments, and holding forth, and instrumentally communicating all gifts and graces acted and applied by the Spirit, (for so are *living waters* to be understood, *John 4. 14.* and *7. 38. 39.*) shall by the Apostles be derived from *Jerusalem* ere it be destroyed, to all parts of the world, figured out by the bounds of the land of *Canaan*, from the lake of *Sodom* on the East, (or further to the *Perick sea*, *Ezech. 47. 8.*) and the *Mediterranean sea* on the West, and shall be as a Spring-well, which shall

shall continue both Summer and Winter. That on the East is called the *former*, and that on the West the *hinder sea*, according to the Jewes way of naming the foure windes of heaven, from the posture of a man with his face to the East, where the South is on his right hand, the North on his left, and the West behinde him. *Doct. 1.* The pouring out of the Spirit, and the refreshments of the Gospel, are the chief meanes of healing the Churches distempers, and sweetening her sad times; for, this makes light in her darknesse and evening, that *living waters* go out. *2.* The Spirit of Christ and Gospel-riches are sufficient to satise and quench the souls thirst, to take away excessive longing after other things, to refresh the wearie, purge the unclean, and make the barren fruitful; for, in these respects are the treasures conveyed in and by the doctrine of the Gospel, compared to *waters*. *3.* It is the character of these who enjoy the Spirit of Christ, and feed indeed upon the treasures of the Gospel, that they are lively and fresh, not mouldie, rotten and formal, nor as emptie clouds without raine: for, *these waters are living waters*, not only themselves springing and constant, but in these who drink them, lively in their effects. *4.* It speaks much of the freedome and riches of grace offered in the Gospel, that they are not confined to any one Nation or People, but sent abroad unto all (or many) Nations, and that they are sufficient to refresh and satise all, as a river that waters a whole Kingdome, or whose city, every one receiving, as if there were no more to receive; for, *They shall go forth from Jerusalem to the former and the hinder sea*. The doctrine of the Gospel is permanent, and to endure for ever, so as neither heat of persecution, nor decay of zeal in the Church, shall be able to overthrow it, or hinder it from spreading where Christ pleaseth, and from triumphing over error. It is also permanent in its effects in believers, in whom grace once received shall never be totally extinct, and it shall be to them enough for all conditions, to refresh them in the heat of persecution, and quicken them in their dead and frozen condition. *In Summer and in Winter it shall be*, as a Spring, that is, neither exhausted with Summer-heat, nor made inaccessible, or dried up with Winter-frost.

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Ver. 9. *And the LORD shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his Name one.*

The communicating of these Gospel-blessings unto the world, is amplified from an effect, that they should so water and fructifie the world, and bring it in subjection unto Christ, that he should be an universal King over Jewes and Gentiles, and that this Kingdom should be an united Kingdom, being in subjection to one Lord, and his spiritual regiment, idols being renounced, and following one way of truth, profession and worship (which are *his Name* whereby he is known) false doctrine and corruption in worship and government, and badges of distinction being taken away. *Doct.* 1. It is the work of the Gospel to bring in our Lords rent, as King of the earth, which other wise he gets not; for, however Christ as God be *King of all the earth*, in all ages, yet he is not acknowledged to be so, but by them who receive the Gospel. 2. Christ as Mediatour and King of Saints, hath by right, and will have by possession, an universal Kingdom, by the spreading of the Gospel, and gathering of a Church unto himself, in one Kingdom after another, till the Kingdomes of the earth become the Lords and his Christ: for, *The Lord shall be King over all the earth*, wherein yet there may be a limitation of some *Age*, or some place requestrate. 3. The Church is not only Christs Bride and Spoule, but his Kingdom, to be subject unto him in all things, to be ruled by his Word and Spirit, and ought to acknowledge that spiritual order and government, established by him in his own house; for, *The Lord shall be King*. 4. Whatever difference there be in the world about a Deity, and about the doctrine and way of worship of the true God, yet as there is but one true God, so there is but one way of faith, of worship and Government established and approved by him; for, when the Church comes to be right indeed, then there is but *one Lord, and his Name one*, which is agreeable to the patencie. 5. As unity in the faith, and uniformity in Religion and worship, is a desirable blessing among them who acknowledge Christ: so it is a mercy to be expected under the New Testament, so that they are undoubtedly in the way of God, who in

their station endeavour it, and it would come better speed, if these who outwardly professe one Lord, would lay aside idols and interests, and not moulder Christs affaires, so as may best suit with their designes; for, here is a promise, *the Lords Name shall be one*, to wit, in all the earth, where he is King, and this goes on, when indeed in matters of Religion, we eye and minde but one Lord. The accomplishment of this promise, as it hath begun in some more ample measure of late then formerly, so the more full accomplishment of it, seems to be reserved for the conversion and restauration of *Israel*, of which in the following purpose.

Verſ. 10. All the land shall be turned as a Plaine, from Geba to Rimmen, South of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place: from Benjamins gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner-gate, and from the tower of Huaniel, unto the Kings wine-presses.

11. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction, but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

In the fifth part of the Prophecie is held forth *Israels* interest in these Gospel-priviledges, and their being a part of this universal Kingdom, (which will be a part of that light evening, v. 7.) unto them is promised, 1. That the Church and people of *Israel* should be exalted, noble and conspicuous, as if all the hillie land of *Judea*, were turned in a plain, betwixt *Geba* or *Gibea* of *Benjamin* on the North, *1 Kings* 15. 22. and *Rimmon* on the South, *Josh.* 15. 21. with 32. and the City *Jerusalem* lifted up on an hill, and made conspicuous. 2. That the City *Jerusalem* should be built again in its old place, having the same precincts and limits, and be inhabited by them. 3. That the City being again repaired, should be no more utterly destroyed, as formerly, which cannot be understood of the City, as it was in building in *Zecharies* time, for it is fore-propheied, v. 1, 2. and history and experience confirms that it was destroyed utterly, but that after the Conversion of *Israel*, and

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and its reparation in its own place, (which cannot well be taken spiritually) it should not be so destroyed again. 4. That Jerusalem shall be a safe habitation for them, to wit, especially after these enemies are subdued, who shall molest them and hinder their possession of the land: of which in the following verses. *Doct.* 1. As the Church of converted Israel will be a noble and conspicuous part of Christs universal Kingdome, and to whom many will look as a conspicuous pattern of the uniformity promised in the former verse; so the Church, whether of Jew or Gentile, is the only noble society of the world, to which all interests ought to subordinate themselves, lest God raise his Church upon the ruines of them; for, *all the land shall be turned as a Plain, from Geba to Rimmon, South of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up* 2. Long desolations of a Church, & the rubbish of countreys and cities, wherein God hath an interest, will be in due time remembred, and their calamities end in a complete restitution; for so will Jerusalem and that people finde, *Jerusalem shall be inhabited in her place, &c. and men shall dwell in it.* 3. The Lord will, when he seeth it fit, and his time is come, not only restore his people, but preserve them being restored, and put an end to their calamities, in so far as whatever trouble they may have to exercise them, yet they shall not utterly be destroyed, or lie under such calamities, as may prove them devoted to a curse; for, *There shall be no more utter destruction, or, no more Anathema.* 4. The Lord will sometime even give his people a breathing from troubles, after long tossings; as well as exemption from ruine by their troubles when they come: and however the Church be not always so dealt with, yet she is the place of greatest security for habitation in all the world, and where the Lords people may take their hazard of any lot that may come, with greatest confidence; for, *Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited, or, abide in confidence.*

Vers. 12. And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem: their flesh shall consume away, while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

In the sixth part of this prophetic, the judgements of God upon the enemies and persecutors of the Church, and especially of converted *Israel*, are foretold and branched out in several judgements: the first is, a sudden stroak from the Lord shall shortly consume them, and so frustrate their hopes, and silence their boasting. *Doct.* 1. As the Church of God will not want many enemies, so every one who engage themselves in such a course, do but seek their own ruine; for, *There is a plague for all the people that have fought against Jerusalem.* 2. The Lord needs neither armies nor advantages of viable help or time wherewith to plague his enemies, but as he usually reserves such for his own hand, so he can so suddenly and unexpectedly consume their strength and power, as may make their ruine a wonder to themselves and others; for, *Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet*, before they get so much as leasure to sit down, and be sick, some proof whereof was given on *Antiochus*, *1 Mac. 6.* and *Herod*, *Act. 12.* 3. As mens parts of Prudence or Eloquence will prove nothing when God is a partie: so the insolencie, blasphemie, and cruel hope of enemies to see the Church ruined, will be more severely avenged then their afflicting otherwise, and an end will be put to it, by Gods plaguing them; for, this *consuming of their eyes and tongue*, imports, not so much a consuming of these particular members, as in general, a blasting of their parts and abilities under this stroak, whether of Prudence in foreseeing and raking up of things, or Eloquence to expresse themselves, whereby men have sometime exped themselves out of trouble; and in particular, that their haughtie eye and blasphemous tongue shall suffer especially, and that this stroak shall consume their eye which hoped first to see the destruction of the Church, and their tongue wherewith they hoped to boast of victory.

Ver. 13. And it shall come to passe in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them, and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour; and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.

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The second judgement upon them shall be intestine dissensions from the Lord, so that they shall in an hostile manner lay hold on, and rise up against one another. *Doct. 1.* The Lord needs no more for ruining enemies, but their own swords, he can divide their tongues and hands, and make a *Babel* of them; every one hindering or overturning another; for, *They shall lay hold every one* (not so much to be supported in this extremity, as by way of violence) *on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour.* 2. Intestine dissension amongst a people, is an evidence of a great judgement from the Lord upon them, and of a madnesse; for, *It is a great tumult from the Lord among them*, that causeth this, which is the posture and carriage of mad men. 3. No wisdom of men nor politick principles wherein they are united, will keep them together, who are not at one in God, and in his way, but when he hath them to ruine, he can shake them asunder; for, when he sends a tumult, the wisest, and these who otherwise would think it madnesse to divide, will take hold, and rise up against his neighbour.

Verf. 14. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold and silver, and apparel in great abundance.

The third judgement upon them shall be, that God shall employ his people to act for their own defence, and give them so compleat a victory, as that they shall gather the rich spoile of enemies, to make up themselves. *Doct. 1.* Albeit deliverance to the Church be sweet, by whatever means God send it, yet it is a special token of favour, when God employes his people, and makes them instrumental in their own deliverance from enemies; for, so it is, *that Judah also shall fight*, (and consequently prevail) *at Jerusalem.* It is a publick evidence of Gods being with them, and intending their good in these deliverances. 2. As men that spoile all the world to enrich themselves, ordinarily are never satisfied, so especially enemies their coming against the Church, is not so much out of poverty or want, as cruelty and desire of her blood; for, they have *wealth, gold, silver, and apparel in abundance*, and yet must

trouble the world more, and they are not well enough, unless they drink the Churches blood. 3. When the Lord sends troubles upon his people, it is his way to make them up thereby ere all be done; for, all this wealth is gathered, that *Judah*, having obtained victory, may be enriched by the spoile.

Ver. 15. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camell, and of the asse, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague.

The conclusion of this threatening is, that not only the enemies themselves should feele this judgement, but the very means employed by them in their wars, whether mercenarie souldiers who employ themselves in war for gaine, and so are like beasts, or rather literally their beasts for carriage and service, should share in the plague, and especially in that consumption, *v* 12. *Dost.* 1. The Lords indignation against troublets of his people is such, that it will break forth not only on rational creatures, but upon the very means and instruments they employ, that so he may disable them from the like attempts in time coming, and let it be seen how he resents his peoples wrongs, in ruining them and theirs who have hand in it: for, *horses, mules, &c.* that are in these tents, are plagued as well as men. 2. It is the great sin of man, that being the creatures Lord, he should employ them against God, and so bring them under the stroak of wrath, and be the cause of much misery on all things as well as himself; for these enemies bring all these creatures to be plagued with themselves. 3. Gods justice upon the very senselesse or irrational creatures ought to be laid to heart, as well as that which cometh upon men; for, this plague is held out to be considered as well as the rest.

Verf. 16. And it shall come to passe, that every one that is left of all the Nations which came against Jerusalem. shall even go up from year to year to worship the King the LORD of hostes, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles.

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In the seventh part of this Prophecie, there is an exception made from the former sentence of judgement, foretelling of the conversion of multitudes (or many of every sort) of the enemies of the Church, when they shall see Gods judgements on the rest. And that they shall joyne with the Church of Israel in acknowledging Christ, and in his publick spiritual worship, expressed in termes taken from the Ceremonial Law, because it could not be understood in the Prophets time, but in these termes. *Doff.* 1. As after the Lord hath plowed the world by judgements, he useth to make a seed-time, and harvest of Conversion: so he can, and oft-times will bring in very enemies, by sad strokes, and by making friends of them, shew his kindnesse to his Church; for, after all these judgements, *every one that is left, &c.* shall come to the Church. 2. Gospel-worshippers ought to be painful and spiritual, *going up, or ascending,* and constant, doing this *from year to year*, and ought to have an high estimation of God, and come with reverence before him, who is *the King the Lord of hostes*. This is the substance of that type of yearly appearing before the Lord at *Jerusalem*; the worship of God not being tied to any special place under the Gospel, but the publick worship of Christians, whereever they dwell, makes it a *Jerusalem*. 3. This keeping of the feast of Tabernacles, is not to be understood literally, in regard the Ceremonial Law is abolished by the death of Christ, but the spiritual publick worship of the Church is pointed at, which was signified by these solemn feasts, and particularly this feast is pitched on rather then another. 1. Because it was a feast of great joy, *Lev. 23. 40.* signifying that the New Testament affords not only matter of feasting, but cause of exceeding joy. 2. Because this feast shadowed out Christs Incarnation, and dwelling in the Tabernacle of our flesh, *Joh. 1. 14.* which is the chiefe subject and matter of joy to the Church of the New Testament. 3. Because it had relation to the preservation of *Israel*, fourty years in the wilderness, till the Lord brought and settled them in the promised land; and so it holds out that these Converts will especially observe the Providence of God toward them, in preserving them, till by the Gospel they were brought into the Church: and generally, that true Converts under the Gospel, will be eying much the heavenly *Canaan* their rest, as approaching on the back of these dayes.

Ver. 17. *And it shall be, that who so will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem, to worship the King the LORD of hostes, even upon them shall be no raine,*

Unto this petition a threatening is subjoynd against these who will not submit themselves and joyne with the Church, to wit, that they should want raine, whereby is signified literally, barrenesse of their land, and famine, or more generally, the want of a refreshful blessing, or of a testimony of favour upon them and what they have, they wanting heavenly grace and influence. *Doct. 1.* Most fruitful and flourishing times of the Church, will not want sleighters, opposers and refusers; for, there will yet be, *who will not come up, &c.* 2. Judgements will be multiplied on these, who having seen the hand of the Lord upon enemies, and having been convinced by the stooping of others, do yet stand out and rebel; for, after the plague of the Nations, and others going up to Jerusalem, this plague comes on others. Clear convincing light, being disobeyed, ripens for sad strokes. 3. Where the Gospel, and Christ offered in it is not received, as it is a judgement sufficient to be deprived of the refreshful grace of God, and be left under scorching wrath: so God can easily adde to this, famine of their bodies who suffer their soules to starve, and the withholding of his blessing from temporal estates; for, *Even upon them shall be no raine.*

Ver. 18. *And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no raine: there shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of Tabernacles.*

This threatening is particularly applied to Egypt, the Churches old enemy, who by reason of the overflowing of Nilus, seemed not to need raine, *Deut. 11. 10.* and though they had some at sometimes, *Psal. 105. 32.* yet they might
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subſiſt better without it then others, they are threatened with the ſame plague with others, and to be as much ſtrained as if they needed raine. Doſt. 1. As ſuch as have been greateſt enemies, may yet be gained to the Goſpel, ſo ſuch perſevering in their rebellion will be eſpecially eyed and ſtricken: therefore he names *Egypt* the Jewes ancient enemy, ſuppoſing that ſome of them will ſubmit, as is promiſed, v. 16. and threatening the rebels that he will then pay them home, once for all. 2. The way of the wicked's temporal mercies ſeem to put them out of God's reverence, or at leaſt they reckon ſo, whereas the excellencie of any mercie the godly receives, conſiſts in this, that it puts them yet to more dependance on God, and to need further manifeſtations of him; for, *Egypt* is a land that ſeems not to need rain, whereas *Canaan* depended on the dew of heaven, *Deut.* 11. 10, 11, 12. 3. No outward eſtate or condition will put a people contemning God, without the reach of his blow; for *Egypt* that hath no raine ſhall not miſſe the ſame plague with others.

Ver. 19. This ſhall be the puniſhment of Egypt, and the puniſhment of all Nations that came not up to keep the feaſt of Tabernacles.

This threatening is again repeated, and generally denounced, that as all do concur in this ſin, (as the word alſo bears,) ſo all ſuch ſhall be puniſhed. Hereby teaching, 1. God is an impartial Judge, and avenger of all ſuch as continue enemies and deſpiſers of him, be who they will; for, *Egypt and all the Nations that come not up are thus plagued.* 2. The wrath of God purſuing ſuch as flee not to him to ſeek his face, is not eaſily believed, either by ſuch deſpiſers to make them ſtand in awe, or by the Church to confirme her in her way of ſeeking him; therefore ſuch a doctrine needs to be repeated, and inculcate.

Ver. 20. In that day ſhall there be upon the bells of the horſe, HOLINES UNTO THE LORD, and the pots in the LORDS houſe ſhall be like the bowles before the Altar.

21. *Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holinesse unto the LORD of hostes, and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and seeth therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hostes.*

In the last part of the Prophecie we have the purity and holinesse of the Gospel-Church, especially after the Conversion of Israel, and of their Gentile enemies unto the Church; this is held out in these particulars: First, that the bells or ornaments of their horses should be marked with *holinesse unto the Lord*, which of old was written upon the High Priests mitre. *Whence learn*, 1. That holinesse is the sweet result of all dispensations toward the Church; for, so doth this whole promise in the general, following upon the former purpose teach. 2. Nothing is so prophane, but it may be sanctified and made holy, when Christ begins to reigne through the world, and it is so unto the pure; for then holinesse shall not be confined to Priests and Temple-services, but *bells of horses* going to war, and these employments that seem most impure shall bear *holinesse unto the Lord*. 3. Holinesse doth then bear full sway, when that which was against God of a man shall be consecrated to him; for, so also the *bells of these horses* that had been employed against the Church, v. 15. should be consecrated to God, and employed in his service, as if pots and instruments for the Temple, (alluding to the legal worship) were made of them.

Secondly, it is promised, that *the pots in the Temple should be like the bowles before the Altar*, not so much for number in regard of many sacrifices, v. 21. as for purity: there being degrees of holinesse in the severall places and instruments belonging thereunto in the Temple, these should be elevated to an higher peg, as if the pots were scoured to shine as bowles, and employed before the Altar, whereby we are taught, not only that all the meanes of Religion, and parts of external worship ought to be according to the Word, as these very pots in the Temple were appointed by God: But, 1. That under the Gospel, especially holiness ought to be upon the growing hand, and encreasing from degree to degree, as if pots were taken to the Altar. 2. That meanest parts of Gospel spiritual worship hath greater

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greater true splendour, then what was more glorious under the Law, pots now are like bowles then.

Thirdly, it is promised that the pots in *Jerusalem* and *Judab* shall be consecrated to God, and employed in sacrifices. Teaching, 1. That true holinesse will extend it self, and shine in a mans most common things and employments, that all these things shall be holy to the holy, and that the godly man will study holinesse in all his life and actions, as if he were about immediate worship: *The pots in Jerusalem and Judab shall be holinesse unto the Lord*, as if they were to be employed to boile sacrifices. 2. Times wherein there are many in-comers to the Church, is a time of thriving in holinesse; for, these things are thus holy, when there are an *all that sacrifice*, and they needing to take these to make use of.

Lastly, it is promised, that *there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hostes*: where allusion is made to the state of *Israel* before Christ, and it may signifie, that however at their first entrie into the land, the Canaanites were not quite expelled, and after their return from *Babylon*, there were Samaritanes and others in the land who vexed them, yet the purity of doctrine and discipline of the Gospel-Church, especially in the latter dayes, shall be such, as no such Canaanite shall be admitted to abide in the Church. And so it teacheth, 1. That the doctrine and discipline of the Church is then agreeable to the Scripture, when by doctrine it is declared that none are allowed or approved as members of the invisible Church in the Court of Conscience, but the elect and faithfull, and the *Israel* of God only; and when by discipline none are admitted or continued members in the outward Court, but such as submit to the doctrine and discipline of the Church, and give up their names unto Christ; for, when this rule is followed, *there is no Canaanite admitted in the house of the Lord*. And who so followeth not this rule, but will follow the rules of the inward Court, in their external Ecclesiastical administrations, or will in the point of doctrine allow people to acquiesce in that as sufficient before God unto salvation, which is sufficient to the visible Church to go upon in the outward Court, these cannot but condemn the innocent, and absolve sinners. 2. The Lord may and doth at some times let out much of his Spirit up-

on his Church, to make real holiness and purity abound in it; and shame out what is contrary to it, or short of it, yet without any prejudice to the rules ordinarily prescribed for constitution of Churches; for, taking this Prophecy at its fullest extent, it only foretels, that in some age of the Gospel Church, and particularly about the Conversion of *Israel*, real holiness and Conversion shall be very frequent, so that all who come to the Church, shall be ashamed not to look somewhat like them, yet supposing they were all to be real Saints, (which never will be within time.) it doth not follow, that it is the duty of the Church in all ages to admit none but such in the outward Court, for his dispensations are not the Churches rule, more then it will follow, that because the Lord makes in every age some real Saints more eminent then others, therefore the Church should reject all who come not to that pitch. But if we look on these words more narrowly, we may finde them looking another way: for the promise is not of their being cast out of the land, but of their not being in the Temple, where Canaanites were not admitted as such to enter or abide: sometime indeed prophane Nations entered it by force, but that was the Jewes affliction, not their sin, and hath nothing to do in this place, where the holiness, not the security of the Church is held out. And therefore I conceive that the place points at the practice of the Jewes in their Temple, who had Gibeonites, (who were Canaanites and were afterward from their office called Nethinims, *Ezra* 2. 58. *1 Chro* 9. 2) given for the service of the Priests and Congregation, in bringing wood and water to the Altar and sacrifices, *Josb* 9. 21, 27. and foretels that there shall be none such then in the Temple, to signifie and teach, not so much that there should be no sacrifices then needing such service; as 1. That under the Gospel there is no distinction of Nations, *no Canaanite in the Temple*, to serve in inferiour offices, and Israelite or Levite to the Minister to the Lord, for, then Priests and Levites are of remotest Nations, *Isa* 65. 20, 21. 2. That the truly godly will be ready to condescend to meanest service to God, and for his people, and esteem of the lowest place in the Church as too high for them; for, *there shall be no more a Canaanite*, there shall be no need of some baser people to set apart for these services that are basest, for the greatest of these who consecrate themselves to God, will be willing to do them, and count a door-keepers place honour enough for them, *Ps* 84. 10.

MALACHI.



Malachi.

THE ARGUMENT.

HIS Prophet being the last of the Old Testament, is raised up of God after that the second Temple was built, when the peoples zeale was decayed, purity of worship corrupted, and vices had crept in amongst them, and all things were now growen worse, and he seems to have lived toward the latter end of *Ezra* or *Nehemiah*, in whose times some of the faults taxed by him were committed. The scope of the Prophecie is, partly to reprove these grosse faults, whereof (for most part) both Priests and people were guilty, such as ingratitude, contempt of God and his worship and service, unlawful marriages, polygamy, adultery, divorces, perjury, oppression, sacrilege, atheisme, murmuring against Providence, &c. partly, to encourage the godly, who kept their integrity in such declining times. And partly, to foretel more distinctly of the coming of Christ in the flesh; and of his fore-runner *John the Baptist*; and to direct the Church how to carry themselves in the mean time, and to assure both wicked and godly what they might expect by his coming.

CHAP. I.

IN this Chapter after the Inscription, v. 1. the Lord by the Prophet, 1. Reproves the people for their ingratitude, and
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light estimation of his love, which had appeared in his Election of *Jacob* their father, rather than *Esau*, v. 2, 3. — and moderating their afflictions when *Esau* land was desolate, v. 3. and should continue so, v. 4. whereby they should be convinced of Gods goodnesse toward them, v. 5. 2. He reproves their contempt of God, v. 6. which appears in their polluted service, v. 7. and faultie beasts for sacrifices, which no governour would take off their hand, v. 8. and threatens them with rejection of their prayers and intercessions, v. 9. and of their persons and sacrifices, as being greedy, and justly unacceptable, v. 10. with transferring his worship from them to the Gentiles, v. 11. to punish their prophane contempt of him and his service, and their wearying at, and sleighting of it, v. 12, 13. and with a curse for their double dealing with so great a Lord, v. 14.

Ver. 1. **T**he burden of the Word of the LORD
to Israel by Malachi.

The Inscription of the Prophecie holds out, 1. The authority of this message, and the instrument that carried it, it is the Word of the Lord by Malachie, who what he was, whether *Ezra*, (called by this name in respect of his office) or some other, is no great matter, only his name signifieth my messenger, or, Gods messenger, by whom God sent his Word, which is the chiefe thing to be eyed in Gods servants, that we do not sleight God in sleighting them, and what they say. 2. These to whom the message is directed are *Israel*, that is, such of all the tribes, as had come up from *Babylon*: for, though *Judah* and *Benjamin* were chiefe, yet others were joyned with them; They are called *Israel*, that considering they were all that was now left of *Israel*, in any visible fellowship with God, the rest being scattered for these sins which they now committed, and considering that these courses were more like *Israel*, yet rejected, then *Judah* that had obtained so much mercy, they would hearken to the Word, and not persevere. 3. The nature of this message, (atleast a great part of it, for there is somewhat beside) is a burden of reproofs and threatenings, which were heauey for a tender Prophet to carry, and insupportable in their effects for a wicked people to endure. It teacheth, that when the Church enjoys any time of a select Reformation,

mation, ordinarily she growes so carnal, and carrieth her selfe so, as provokes God to have much to say against her; for, whereas the former two Prophets were sent out with many encouragements, while the Temple was in building; now when it is built, and the people after their long tossing, settled, this Prophet is sent in a different stile, and with the burden of the Word of the Lord to Israel.

Verſ. 2. *I have loved you, ſaith the LORD: yet ye ſay, Wherein haſt thou loved us? Was not Eſau Jacobs brother, ſaith the LORD? yet I loved Jacob,*

3. *And I hated Eſau, and laid his mountaines, and his heritage waſte, for the dragons of the wilderneſſe.*

The fiſt fault reproved in this people, is their ingratitude, and not obſerving nor eſteeming of Gods love toward them, which therefore he demonstrates, from his chooſing of Jacob their father, and preferring him to Eſau the elder brother: not only in the matter of Election to eternal life, but in that God had choſen Jacob to be the root out of whom the bleſſed ſeed ſhould come, and the Church propagated in his poſterity; and accordingly (as an external evidence of this rejection of Eſau and his poſterity) the Lord had given to him but an hillie barren countrey, and had now caſt them out of it, and laid it deſolate as an habitation for wilde beaſts: whereas the ſeed of Jacob had gotten a fruitful land, and were now reſtored to it again after their captivity. *Doct. 1.* The chief and principal ſtudy of the viſible Church, and the godly in it, ought to be the love of God manifeſted toward them; as being that which God will not allow to be ſuſpected, and which ought to oblige them to him: that which will be the ſad ground of a proceſſe when it is forgotten and undervalued; and that which being looked on when God reproves, will encourage and ſtrengthen to take with it, and make uſe of it. Therefore doth he begin his doctrine, and the ſad challenges with this, *I have loved you, ſaith the Lord*, that is, all of you in general, have taſted of reſpects ſuitable, and beſeeming my Bride and the viſible Church:

Church: and particularly the Elect among you have tasted of my special love. 2. Gods love to his Church is oft-times met with great ingratitude, in not being seen and acknowledged as becomes, especially under crosse dispensations, in undervaluing the effects of it, when they fit not our mould, and in deeds denying it, while thoughts of it do not beget love to him again; for, *Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us?* 3. Election unto eternal life is a sufficient testimony of Gods love, to be acknowledged and commended, although all things else were crosse, and seemed to speak dis-respect; for, in this, *the Lord loved Jacob, and hated Esau*, as is expounded, *Rom. 9. 13.* and this is sufficient to answer their quarrelling. 4. To be chosen and selected to be the Lords Church and peculiar people, speaks so much respect from God unto a Nation, as may counterbalance many other hard lots; for, thus also *was Jacob loved, and Esau hated*, and is a favour to be esteemed of. 5. The Lords love will not be so clearly seen and acknowledged, when we compare some dispensations with the privileges bestowed upon us, but when we consider our own original, and wherein we are dealt favourably with beyond others, as good as our selves, if not better; for, however *Israel*, looking on their many privileges, could not see Gods love in their low condition, yet it would better appear when they looked back, that *Esau was Jacobs brother*, (and the elder too) and yet *I loved Jacob and I hated Esau*. 6. The grace of God is not dispensed differently in the world, upon any difference in the point of worth among men, but grace it self makes the difference in choosing our one, and leaving another, as good in himself to his own wayes, according to his pleasure, who hath mercie on whom he will have mercy; for, *Jacob and Esau are equal*, till love make the difference. 7. However no man can know love or hatred by outward dispensations, simply considered in themselves, yet afflictions are to wicked men, real testimonies of Gods displeasure, and Gods people being at peace with him, may look on external mercies, as speaking special love; for *Esaus hillie land*, and the desolation thereof, speaks *hating of Esau*, not only as rejection from *Canaan*, was a type of rejection from the Church and heaven, but as it was a judgement inflicted on a Nation unreconciled; whereas (at least) the godly in *Israel*, might look otherwise on their land and restitution.

Verse 4. *Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickednesse, and the people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.*

5. *And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.*

The last evidence of a difference put betwixt Esau and Jacob, in laying Esau's land desolate, is yet further confirmed, by meeting with a great objection; for, whereas Esau might think, that as Judah and they had been both afflicted, so they should recover and return as well as Judah; The Lord threatens that their condition should be irrecoverable, and their endeavours that way to no purpose; for, however they were a people after this, yet their captivity was never recalled by any decree, only some reliques of them, mingled with other Nations, remained in the land, till they were subdued by the Jews (as History records) and forced to receive circumcision, and renounce their Nation; and till at last their name utterly perished. This their condition is further amplified, that it should be conspicuous and remarkable, 1. To all beholders, who seeing Gods anger against them, should account them and their land, a border of wickednesse, where impiety hath come to an height and border, and overflowed to the very border, so that if any should come to their border, they would stay there, and cry, *Ab wicked land!* and because of this should account them hated for ever of God. 2. It should be remarked by the Jews, and they should be forced to confesse his goodnesse to them and their land, and that he is magnified from the border of Israel, that is, from the land of Israel, from whence they might observe Gods magnifying his vengeance on Edom, while they were well dealt with; or, upon which God would magnifie himselfe by shewing mercy on it, and the inhabitants, even to the very border, as v. 4. *Edoms wickednesse and plagues stretched to the very border.* *Dea. 1.* It is the property of wicked men when God plagueth them, to

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think of a change and to oppose the course of Gods justice, and to think to free themselves, without minding repentance; for, *Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return, and build the desolate places.* 2. As where God is a party, mens endeavours to exempt themselves from trouble, will not availe: so an impenitent people, not submitting to God in rods, nor laying to heart his controversie, will finde all means that may promise them deliverance, prove yaine; for, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down.* 3. It is a sad addition to plagues, that the Lord thereby not only makes a people miserable, but to be publick spectacles, and beacons hereof to others; *And they shall call them, &c.* 4. Judgements ought never to be looked on, nor will be rightly considered, but when sense of sinne and guiltinesse procuring the same, is looked on, and that in all its aggravations and grossnesse; for, first they are called *the border of wickednesse*, and then anger will be seen justly to follow. 5. It is the sad lot of the wicked under their strokes, that they are procured by grossest sinnes, prosecuted by unmixed wrath of the great God, and that they are without hope of restitution, within time, and (however it go in time) may expect to have their misery eternal; for, so is *Edom, the border of wickednesse, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever.* 6. As no dispensation of God, especially upon eminent enemies, should passe over without the Churchs observation; so the Lord will in due time convince his Church of his love to her, how much soever she quarrel it; for, *Your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, the Lord will be magnified.* 7. As Gods kindnesses toward his Church, are not ordinary but singular, wherein God magnifies his mercy, power, &c. so the thought thereof, especially being compared with remarkable strokes on enemies, ought to produce praise and acknowledgment; for seeing that on *Edom*, from their own land, they shall acknowledge their own mercy and say, *The Lord is magnified from (or upon) the border of Israel.*

Verf. 6. *A sonne honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If then I be a Father, where is mine honour? and if I be a Master, where is my fear, saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O Priests, that despise*

my Name? and I say, Wherein have we despised thy Name.

The second fault, for which the Priests especially are a large reproved, is the contempt of Gods Name, which the Lord may justly complaine of, considering both, that he was herein slighted more then any creature calling for such respect was by another; a master or father would get more respect then he who was both in an eminent way, to that people; and (which is yet more) that they did not consider this, nor were convinced of it: *Dost. 1.* The Lord doth approve of domestical and civil relations, and of these duties and respects which flow therefrom, he approves that *a sonne honour his father, and a servant his master.* 2. Relations to, and in God are not bare titles, or grounds whereupon we may expect favours from God only, but do carry in their bosome obligations to duties on our part; for, his being a *Father*, calls for *honour*; and his being a *Master*, for *fear*. 3. As the Lord hath an absolute dominion over all his creatures, and especially over his Church, whom he hath made and purchased to be his in a peculiar way: so it hath pleased him to sweeten this with a more warme relation of fatherly affection and care, to his people; He is both a *Master*, and a *Father*. 4. The Lord allows and requires that service performed to him be seasoned both with fear and love, that love and a desire to honour him as a *Father*, be the principle of our obedience, and yet that we look on our selves as servants in respect of strict obligation to duty, and fear to offend; for, as a *father*, he must have *honour*, and as a *master*, *fear*. 5. As it is the grand delusion that linders the visible Church, that it is sufficient to give good words, and faire titles to God, though no care be had of answerable walking; So the Lord will make use of that which every one acknowledges, to be a witness against themselves, if their carriage be not answerable; for, *If I be a Father, (as ye call me) where is my honour? If I be a Master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts.* 6. As men in performing duties to God, come farre short of that which very nature will teach them is due to creatures, standing in the same relation (though in an inferior degree) that God is; so the very respect, which is paid as due to such, will be a duty against slights of God: for, *a sonne honouring his father, and a servant his master*, reproves them, who neither honour nor fear God, being both. 7. Carnal

contempt, and want of reverence unto, and an high estimation of God, in every duty, is a fountaine-cause of all miscarriage, and an evidence that we behave our selves either as sonnes nor servants; for, he proves want of honour and fear, because *ye despise my Name.* 8. However to sleight and disesteem of God be a general sinne in the visible Church, yet ordinarily teachers of others are chiefly guilty, not only in their own walking and service, but also in their accession to the guilt of others, while their way makes others to abhorre or contemne God and his service, or hardens them in so doing, and while they neither informe or reprove people in their sleighting of God, but applauds them in it, as if it were good service; therefore, however all the people were guilty of these faults, yet more especially *ye Priests despise my Name.* 9. A people living under ordinances, and injoying priviledges, and not profiting, will soon come to this, not to see their sinne well, nor to consider on it, and be hard to be convinced of it; for, when God challengeth, they replie, and *ye say, Wherein have we despised thy Name?* and so frequently through this booke.

Verse 7. *To offer polluted bread upon mine Altar, and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The Table of the LORD is contemptible.*

The Lord proves this challenge of their concerning him, which they denied, or considered not by their publick service offered to him; Wherein they heeded not the rule, but used prophane or common bread instead of shew-bread, or in their sacrifices of thanksgiving, Lev. 2. or generally all their sacrifices were not agreeable to the Law, whereby indeed they polluted God who appointed the service, and made the Lords table (or Altar, Ezek. 41. 22.) contemptible, and that so much the rather, as this flowed from a corrupt principle; that the outward splendor of the Temple ceasing since the captivity, they needed not such an exact care of the service; or the outward service of it selfe being but base, as pouring out of blood; burning of fat, &c. therefore it was not to be stood upon; any thing might suffice. Doct. 1. Sleighting and prophaning of Gods worship is matter of a sad challenge, it being full of hazard in practise what is not commanded in worship, to do that which

it commanded, sleightly, bringing common dispositions to his immediate service; or, in ordinary conversation not to walk as becomes worshippers. for, this is signified by this challenge, *ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar*, their sacrifices were polluted, either when they were not such as the law required, or when the worshippers had not Temple purifications; or when having committed abominions, they came and trusted to their purifications and offerings, *Isa. 1. 11, 15. Jer. 7. 9, 10.*

2. God constructs of mens prophaning of his worship any way as done against himselfe, and flowing from much contempt of him, who if he were revered, his service would be more exactly attended; for, *their offering of polluted bread*, proves that challenge that *they despise his Name*, *v. 6.* and is *a polluting of him*: our respect to him will appear chiefly in our immediate approaching to him. 3. As it is a special, and not an ordinary favour, for sinners to be bettered by admonition, and reproof; so the more they are reprov'd and not bettered, it hardens the more and addes to the sinne; for, this replie, *wherein have we polluted thee?* imports not only that they had been reprov'd before by the Prophets, but that they were so farre from being bettered, that they went on in the sinne without a challenge, and were so hardened, that they would not be convinced. 4. It is a great aggravation of sinne, when men not only go wrong and see it not, but see also reason why they should do as they do, and their principles lead them to sinne; for, it was an high polluting of God, when not only *the bread was polluted*; but they seem'd to have reason for what they did, and said, *That the table of the Lord is contemptible*, and therefore, they might offer any thing. 5. It is also an high provocation in men, to bring the worship and service of God in contempt, in their own or others estimation, when it is not looked on as mens highest honour, and advantage in the world, to get leave to serve him: but either outward discouragements attending it, makes it to be sleighted; or carnal dispositions, and familiarity, breeding a bold profanenesse, by looking on the external means of worship, not eying the end they are appointed for, or the blessing that attends them, makes them seem low, and base and not so be regarded; for, this was their fault, *They say, The table of the Lord is contemptible*, his worship, not to be regarded, considering the baseness of the Temple, or of the external Ceremonies in themselves.

Verse 8. *And if ye offer the blinde for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor: will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person, saith the LORD of hosts?*

The challenge is yet further proven by instancing their faulty sacrifices, prohibited by the law, *Lev. 22. 20, 21. Deut. 15. 21* which their own consciences could not justify: and it is aggravated from this, that their governors, who received some acknowledgements from them, *Nebem. 5. 14, 15.* would not accept them in bringing such a gift, as they offered to God to please him. *Psalm. 1.* The best way to convince our selves or others of sinne, is to be particular in our examination, on reproof, and not to rest on generals; for, the Lord here condescends on particulars, to instruct the challenge the better. 1. It may stirre up Ministers to freedome and faithfulness, and persuade others to allow them in being so; that all the faults of the people which they reprove not, nor oppose, are laid to their charge; for, they are challenged for all the faulty sacrifices the people brought, in regard they did not reject them, nor reprove the bringers, but offered them up. 2. Albeit conscience doth not alwayes get liberty to speak impartially to men, yet the consciences of the most corrupt and stupid, will plead against their way, when they are put to it, and especially for sleighting of God in the matter of his worship, as if his rule were not to be followed, nor he worthy of our best things. Therefore, he appeals to themselves who for present would not be convicted, *If ye offer the blinde for sacrifice, is it not evil? &c.* 3. These properties required in sacrifices, as they shadowed out the absolute perfections of Christ the true sacrifice for sinne: so they also pointed out somewhat to be regarded by every Christian in their sacrifice of spiritual service, that they should study integrity and uprightness in them, and particularly, that God doth not approve of ignorant service, worshipping we know not what, signified by the blinde sacrifice. 2. That he approves not of crooked hypocrisie, where there is not a thoroughness in our resolutions to follow God, *1 Kings. 18. 21.* or, where there is discord betwixt the outward and inward man, signified by the

lane sacrifice. 3. He dislikes also languishing service, want-
ing life, or vigor of affection, or cheerfulness, signified by the
fick sacrifice. *Doff.* 5. It is the high presumption and athe-
isme, and will be the sad challenge of men, that they please
themselves in offering that unto God, and do that in his service
which they durst not do unto a superior mortal man, and which
they know well enough men would take off their hand, nor be
pleased with them that did so; for, *Offer it now to thy gover-
nour, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the
Lord of hosts,* that is, he will neither please thy gift, nor accept
of thee for bringing of it, but thy gift will make thy selfe to
be rejected.

*Verf. 9. And now, I pray you, beseech God, that
he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your
meanes: will he regard your persons, saith the LORD
of hosts?*

Having thus challenged them and proven them guilty: un-
to the end of the Chapter, he pronounces sentence and threa-
tens them, repeating also the causes, to evince the equity of the
sentence. The first part of the sentence containes a rejection
of their intercessions for themselves or the people, (as was the
Priests office,) and appealing to experience, bids them trie it,
and see what speed they should come; and appeales to their own
conscience, whether they who were chief authors in this evil of
polluting Gods worship, and (as the original also reads it) by
whose very hands these faulty sacrifices were offered, were fit to
pray for the rest? or if God should accept their person or face,
as Mediators in name of the people? *Doff. 1.* It is the wofull
presumption and neck-break of many, that when they walk as
they please, they yet think to continue in the reputation of being
seekers of God, and by prayer (while yet they continue in un-
repented sinne) to turne away any stroke; for, this holy irony,
and putting them to it, *I pray you, beseech God,* imports, that
they thought to assey that, and to make all well. 2. It is high
time for a people to pray, when guilt is contracted and wrath
is threatened; mercy also must be the praying mans refuge, and
all ought to be sensible of their having an hand in publick pro-
vocations; for, however this exhortation be directed to them,

as that which they could neither well obey, nor would their obedience be accepted, yet it contains in it lesse a pattern of duty, than in such a time men should beseech God, plead for graciousnesse to us, where the Prophet ranks himselfe among the rest of the people needing this grace. 3. It is a sore judgement, to lie in such a condition as provokes God to reject prayer, considering how we are indigent of all good, and exposed to all danger, and that prayer is the only meane to obtaine the one or remove the other; and especially it is a judgement to be so, and not know it till we be put to the extremity; for, *I pray you, beseech God, will he regard your persons?* imports that God would sufficiently punish them in not hearing them; and that they were so stupid as not to know it, till they essayed it. 4. All who would finde acceptance and audience in prayer, ought to study personally reconciliation with God; and these who are employed by Office or otherwise to intercede for others, ought to be holy themselves, that their personal wickednesse wrong not themselves and others; for, *will he regard your persons?* imports that their persons were not reconciled, and so they could not be heard, and that they were most unfit to intercede for others. 5. As ordinarily unfaithfull Ministers are chief in the guilt of the people; so such as are chief authors in an evil way, cannot but finde their prayers for themselves or others rejected; for, *This hath been by your meanes, (or, from your hand) will he regard your persons?* saith the Lord of hosts. 6. Whatever may be the presumption of secure and impenitent sinners, yet God will make their own conscience, when he awakens it in straits, to pronounce their sentence; for, he appeals to themselves, *will he regard your persons?*

Verl. 10 *Who is there even among you that would shut the doores for nought? neither do you kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hostes, neither will I accept an offering at your hand.*

The second branch of the sentence is, the rejection of their persons and of all their sacrifices, and services performed in the Temple, which is amplified from a question in the beginning of the verse; the meaning whereof, as it is translated, is, as if

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he said, All of you Porters, Priests, and others, have been well rewarded by tythes and other casualties, for your meanest service, and yet ye have proven evil servants, ye have been more greedy of gaine then duty, ye have been carefull for your selves, and would do nothing for me or any of the people for nought, and yet ye have been negligent, and did not your duty faithfully, nor watched over the sacrifices to trie them exactly, and therefore I reject you and your service both. The words in the Original will also bear this reading, *Who among you would shut the doores, and not kindle a fire on my altar in vaine?* &c. as if he said, Is there none among you that hath so much zeal as rather to shut the doores of the Temple, and so hinder these offerings which are in vaine, for I approve not of you, nor will receive them? Both these come to one purpose, that God abhorred and would reject the service of these ingrate servants, it being (in some sort) better they offered none at all. *Doff. 1.* It is a sad judgement when a people are put altogether out of service, that God will have no more from them, or not accept them in it: as importing that God is angry at them, that he will put such away altogether from him at last, and will deprive them of the free reward which is bestowed on his servants; for, this is their doom, *I will not accept an offering at your hand.* Whereas a people getting leave to offer service, and God accepting it at their hand, speaks mercy in saddest times, *Judg. 13. 23.* 2. The worth and excellency of our service depends upon Gods free favour, and his acceptation in Christ of our persons and worship, which when we provoke him to take away or withhold, no worth in us or it will avail, whatever we may conceit or dream; for, where he hath no pleasure, he will not accept an offering. 3. The meanest service performed to God, wants not a reward, yea, even the superficial service he gets, hath its outward reward, during the time of his patience; for, Priests and Porters did not shut the doores, or kindle the fire for nought, they were well paid. 4. It is the Lords allowance, that these whom he sets apart for his publick service in his Church, do live and be maintained thereby; for, Priests and Porters had their allowance. 5. It is the sin, and a token of unfaithfulnesse in Ministers, when they become covetous, and eye the reward more then the work; for, this challenge imports also their covetousnesse, and that as they had allowance, so they minded it much, and were sure to do nothing without that, and having gotten that, they regarded not much

much Gods part. 4. The more kinde God hath been to any in serving him, if yet they prove unfaithful, the greater will their sin be: for, thus is their sin aggravated, they did nothing for ought, and yet did it not well. 7. However it be still a sin to neglect altogether commanded duties, yet in some respect sleighted service, and resting upon external performances, is more hainous then if men altogether let it alone, as being an open proclamation of contempt of God, and that to his face: for, so much doth the other reading of the words import. Sec. 11a. 1. 12, 13. and 66, 3.

Verse 11. For from the rising of the Sun, even unto the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my Name, and a pure offering: for my Name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hostes.

The third branch of the sentence is, that he will transfer the Priesthood from their order, and his worship from that people, and get among the Gentiles (whom they despise) people and Ministers, who will worship him more purely through the world then they do, when he shall magnifie his grace, and manifest his majesty among them; this is subjoynd as a reason to the former sentence, v. 10. he will reject them, for he will get better service elsewhere. *Doct. 1.* The Lord is no loser by any who sleight him: all the advantage or losse of mens service is their own; and though God reject a visible Church for sin, yet he will not want enough to serve him; for, so doth he threaten the Jewes and Priests, that he would fill up their room with Gentiles. *2.* The glory of God, and of his Kingdome in his Church, doth shine more conspicuously under the Gospel then under the Law; for, then his service was restricted to one Nation, now enlarged to all Nations of the Gentiles; then his worship was shut up in Judea, and their solemne worship was only in one place, *Now from the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same, and in every place,* he may be worshipped; then their service, however pure in respect of institution, yet was carnal and full of shadowes, and was at this

this time prophaned by them: But the Gospel-service is not only pure in respect of institution, but more perspicuous and spiritual; and however many do yet pollute it, yet many perform it more purely then they did, and there are far more spiritual and pure worshippers in the Church of the Gospel, then was in the Church of the Jewes: *It shall be incense and a pure offering*, speaking of Gospel-worship in the language of these times. 3. As God is great in himself, so an high estimation of him, (which only himself, who doth reveal himself, can work in hearts,) in his majesty and graciousnesse, is a means to produce reverend and pure worship; for, *My Name shall be great among the Gentiles*, saith he, twice over, as undertaking it, *when incense and a pure offering is offered*.

Verse 12. *But ye have prophaned it, in that ye say, The Table of the LORD is polluted, and the fruit thereof, even his meat is contemptible.*

The equity of this sentence, of rejecting them and choosing others, is confirmed from their (especially the Priests) prophaning of Gods Name, which the heathen would magnifie when it should be made known unto them. This he proves by their deeds and expressions, accounting of the Altar and Temple, as polluted in respect of what it was, and all the oblations or any thing they had for their share as contemptible, and therefore any thing might suffice to be offered. *Doct. 1.* The equity and justice of Gods sentence against sinners, especially in the visible Church, is not soon seen or laid to heart by them, nor the causes procuring it, considered; therefore is it so needful to presse it, as here. 2. Necessary truths and instructions are oft-times so ill heard, that they must be again and again pressed; therefore is that same doctrine repeated here from v. 7. 3. Contempt of God and his service is no where more ripe, then where there is most frequent occasion of service, and it is superficially performed; for, the Priests being still before God, and still about service, they *prophane his Name*, and say, *The Table of the Lord is polluted, &c.* 4 Hyp critical and formal worship is a prophanation, and taking the Name of God in vaine, and in its own kinde an hainous breach of the command, for which God will not hold men guiltlesse; for,

To have profaned my Name, in that ye say, The Table of the Lord is polluted, &c.

Verse 13. *To said also, Behold, what a wearinesse is it? and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD of hostes, and ye brought that which was torne, and the lame, and the sick: thus ye brought an offering: should I accept this of your hand, saith the LORD?*

A further evidence of their profaning his Name, (which yet confirms the sentence) is, that they served God with wearinesse, and snuffed at the frequency of sacrifices, and multitude of ceremonial observations. Whence it came to passe, that they made no conscience of sacrifices, but the people brought, and they accepted what came to hand; or could do no good otherwise, which their own conscience might tell them could not be accepted. *Doct.* 1. Wearying and repining at Gods service, as it is the ordinary sin of all within the visible Church who are carnal, and see not the Majestie of God, nor feel sweetnesse in worship; and especially is the fruit of contempt of him: So it is enough to make service abominable before God, seeing he loves and requires a willing people; *To said also, What a wearinesse is it? and ye snuffed at it.* 2. They who wearie in Gods service, if they do not quite abandon it, will soon sleight it, and minde nothing more when they come about it, then how to get it over any way; for, *Ye brought that which was torne, and the lame, and the sick for an offering.* 3. When men have bred themselves to wearie and sleight God in his service, it is no wonder to see clear light and their conscience prove no aw-band or tie unto them, they will soon either silence or sleight its voice; for, God appeals to their own consciences, *Should I accept this of your hand?* as pleading for him against themselves, and yet they went on.

Verse 14. *But cursed be the deceiver, which bath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the LORD a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith*

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saith the LORD of hostes, and my Name is dreadful among the heathen.

Followeth upon these sins the last part of the sentence, wherein a curse is pronounced upon them, for their great hypocrisie, in pretending too much forwardnesse, and yet (out of diffidence, that if they gave their beasts, they would be poore, and out of their contempt of God, as if any thing might suffice him,) they offered but the refuse of what they had to God: the sintfulness whereof might appear, by considering the greatness of God, which calls for other service; and from the respect he hath among heathens, by reason of common Providences, whereof some proofs appeared, when God shewed forth himself in deliv'ring them from *Babylon. Doct. 1.* As to be under a curse from God is the saddest of judgements, though no present outward affliction should follow thereupon; so it is the portion of obstinate sleighters of Gods worship: *Cursed be the deceiver, &c.* 2. The Lord abhors the wrongs that are done under fairest pretences of zeal and piety, more then these that appear in their own colours, as being twice an injurie; for, *The deceiver is cursed*, who doth all under colour of zeale and forwardnesse, making vowes which are a testimony of singular affection, and performing them, which seems to speak integrity. *He vowes and sacrifices*, and yet it is but a *corrupt thing*, when he hath better. 3. Albeit the Lord can get nothing of it self perfect from his people, yet it is their duty not to give him the refuse of what they have, as if all were lost that is employed in this service, but to spend and employ the best of their strength, time, parts and affections in his service; and albeit our obligation go far beyond our ability, yet it cannot but procure a curse, when willingly we lie by, and emprove not all received ability, for, *He is cursed, who bath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing.* 4. As double and superficial dealing in Gods service, floweth from mean thoughts of him; so his greatness is such, as will not sit with affronts, especially under pretence of doing him honour; for, this is one reason of the curse, *For I am a great King saith the Lord of hostes.* 5. The estimation that very Pagans are forced to have of a Deity, by reason of common Providences, and of the true God from what they see of him at any time in doing for his people, and against their enemies,

emies, may condemn the contempt of him that is among his seeming friends, and shew the equiry of his plaguing them, that he may let forth his glory to the world, upon them who would not honour him. It is another reason of the curse, *My Name is dreadful among the heathen.*

CHAP. II.

IN the first part of this chapter the Lord prosecutes the controversy with the Priests, shewing that the former doctrine concerned them specially, v. 1. which if they neglected, he threatens to plague them and the people, v. 2, 3. and clears, that this should be no breach of Covenant on his part, v. 4. for he had indeed made a Covenant with that tribe, to do them good while they walked with him in their office, v. 5, 6. as was their duty, v. 7. but they transgressing, v. 8. it was just with him to plague them, v. 9. In the second part of the chapter, he accuseth Priests and people of other faults. Such as, 1. Injustice and deceit, v. 10. 2. Marriage with idolaters, v. 11, 12. whereupon followed afflicting of their lawful wives, contrary to their obligation, v. 13, 14. by Polygamie, v. 15. and unjust divorce, v. 16. 3. Impatiency under afflictions, and murmuring against the Providence of God, v. 17.

Verf. 1. **A**nd now, O ye Priests, this Commandment is for you.

The Lord having sharply reprov'd and threatened for the sin of sleighted worship in the former chapter, doth apply that general charge more particularly to the Priests, whom it concerned to see that the publick worship were not prophaned. *Doct. 1.* Particular application of general truths, is the only way to make the Word effectual, that which is spoken generally to all, being ordinarily looked on as spoken to none: therefore doth the Lord here apply it. 2. However men may shift and guard themselves from the challenges of the Word, as thinking themselves not chief in any guilt reprov'd: yet the impartial Word of

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of God will finde out the guilty, and charge that upon the con-
 siderer or flatterer, which another asseith; for, however the
 Priests might have laid the blame on the people that brought
 no other sacrifices, and alledge that if they offered not these,
 they should offer none at all, and so publick worship should cease,
 yet he chargeth it on them who did not their duty to have it o-
 therwise. 3. Ministers had need to have much spoken to them
 from God concerning their duty, they having so few beside to
 speak to them; therefore doth he here take them in teaching, *O
 ye Priests, &c.* 4. Albeit an obligation lie on every publick
 worshipper, to carry himself so as he may be approved of God;
 and albeit Civil Magistrates ought in their Sphere to protect
 the true worship of God, and hold off disturbers; yet the care
 of Christs affairs in his Church, belongs peculiarly to his own
 Church-officers, who by doctrine are to reveal his will, and by
 discipline to censure, and (in an Ecclesiastical way) restrain
 the violation of the rule; for, *O ye Priests, this Commandment
 is for you.* 5. Every reproof and threatening for sin, carrieth in
 the bosome of it a command to amend the fault, and the minde
 of God in them is then rightly seen, when we neither stand
 out, nor (taking with it) are discouraged or hopelesse; but
 when, taking with the fault, we endeavour to get out of angers
 way, by repentance and reformation: for, in this respect all the
 reproofes and threatenings in the former chapter are a *Command-
 ment*, to wit, to return and reform the abuse.

Verse 2. *If ye will not heare, and if ye will not
 lay it to heart, to give glory unto my Name, saith the
 LORD of hostes, I will even send a curse upon you,
 and I will curse your blessings: yea, I have cursed
 them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.*

The use of this application is, that yet they would lay the
 challenge and their sin to heart, and glorifie God in their of-
 fice, by seeing that God be sanctified in his worship, and by ac-
 knowledging their former negligence, as *Josh. 7. 19.* upon the
 neglect whereof, the Lord threatens to curse them and the peo-
 ple, and that in their very outward enjoyments, which are in
 themselves blessings, or in sending curses in stead of the bles-
 sings

sings, which they pronounced should come on the people, where-
of they had some experience already. *Doct. 1.* The first step
unto well-doing is, when people get an attentive care, to at-
tend unto the Word, and do not prophaneely contemn so much
as to hear; *If ye will not heare.* 2. When the Word is heark-
ened unto it will not yet availle, till what we hear, be seriously
meditated upon, and pondered, and the authority of God speak-
ing in it, be laid to heart, and our carriage contrary thereunto,
become grievous unto us: and in this duty much un sanctified
light makes little seriousness; for, this is required of these
Priests who knew more then others. and it is supposed they
will prove negligent; *If ye will not lay it to heart.* 3. Every
one who seriously considers their condition, and what the Word
saith unto them, will be careful to honour God by taking with
their faults, and aime at his glory in their stations. And es-
pecially Ministers being sensible of their duty, will make it
their chief care, to see God exalted in his own ordinances, ra-
ther then how to advantage or set out themselves; for, this fol-
loweth on the other two, *to give glory unto my Name.* 4. Al-
beit the curse of God, (which is the saddest of judgements)
be due for every transgression of his Law; yet it is for the sin
of impenitency chiefly, that the Lord lets out any visible evi-
dences thereof; for, it is when they *will not heare, &c.* that he
sends a curse upon them. 5. Curses are most sad curses when
they are inflicted on blessings, either in removing of them, or
in depriving of the comfort and blessing of them, or in making
them snares to the enjoyers, *I will curse your blessings.* 6. It
is also a sad evidence of a curse upon Ministers and people, when
the blessings allowed upon, or promised to the Church take not
effect, and when Ministers are left to themselves to promise and
pronounce good things, when in the mean time God is sending
on judgements: Thus also are *blessings cursed*, when they (pre-
tending to their office, *Numb. 6. 23.*) flattered the people with
promised blessings, and God did contrary, and sent a curse in-
stead thereof. 7. It is a sad judgement when a people are un-
der a curse, and are insensible, and not stirred up to repent; but
need to have their case being so, and the cause thereof, pressed
upon them; for, they know not till God tell them; *I have
cursed them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.*

Verf. 3. *Behold, I will corrupt your seed, and spread dung upon your faces, even the doing of your solemn feasts, and one shall take you away with it.*

He threatens further upon their disobedience, that he will take away their maintenance, by hindering their seed cast into the ground to grow; and will deny his blessing to their preaching; and that as they slighted God and his service, so he will make them and their artificer as contemptible as the dung of the sacrifices, and cast them out of his sight, as the dung is carried from the Temple. He alludes to the Law, of carrying the dung of sacrifices out without the Camp, Lev. 4. 11, 12. and sheweth, that they should be as if it were all cast on their face, so that these who carried away the dung, might offer to carry them with it.

Doff. 1. It is righteous with God, that such as lay not sin to heart, nor are sensible of spiritual judgements, be stricken in that which they will feel more sensibly, and that they who care not how they serve God, or how his work prosper, so they have a maintenance, be made to know, that he hath their daily bread in his hand, and that the best way to have that ensured, is fidelity in his service; for, saith he, *Behold, I will corrupt your seed.* 2. The Lord needs no more for blasting of all second causes, and making them disappoint the expectations of men, but a word in anger from his mouth, who gave them a being and preserves them, and makes them answer the creatures necessities; for, so it is in the Original, *I will reprove, or rebuke your seed,* and that will corrupt it. 3. As a fruitlesse Ministry is a sad affliction, if not a judgement both on Ministers and people: so it is just with God to make the Word ineffectual in their mouths, who contemne it in their own practice: for, this threatening may also relate to their sowing the seed of the Word in preaching the Law, that it should be corrupted, and do no good to people. 4. Nothing is more vile in Gods sight, and which he will lesse endure, then men whom he honours to have eminent opportunity to serve him, and who yet slight him, and then the service which they so slightly perform, *I will spread dung upon your faces, even the doing of your solemn feasts, and one shall take you away with it.* 5. There is no surer way for mens keeping in honour and reputation then fidelity, and not dallying with God in

his matters or service; for, when men neglect this, they become as dung to be carried away.

Vers. 4. *And ye shall know that I have sent this Commandment unto you, that my Covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Whereas the Priests looked much to the Covenant made with the tribe of Levi, especially with Aarons familie, whereof an illustrious instance was given to Phinehas and his posterity, Numb. 25. 11, 12, 13. as if that might exempt them from threatened judgements; therefore the Lord clears, that all this might consist with that Covenant, that his smiting of them who had not done their duty, was no breach of Covenant on his part, and that they shall be convinced by his sending of this reproof and warning, that any breach that should follow lay not at his door, this warning testifying that he had no delight to strike, were it not for their unanswerableness. *Dost. 1.* As the Lord hath alwayes set some apart in his Church, to minister unto him in holy things, so hath he allowed upon such peculiar encouragements made sure by paction: for, there is a *Covenant with Levi.* 2. As the Lord hath given peculiar encouragements unto them to whom he gives eminent employment in his service. so are they tied by peculiar obligations to their duty, how high soever they be; the neglect whereof is so much the more justly punished, as encouragements are singular, and the punishing of transgressors is without any violation of Covenant on Gods part, the Covenant importing that they should do their duty, or else be punished as Covenant-breakers, and the correcting of them being a means to restore the Covenant, by bringing them to obedience, that they may enjoy the privileges of it; for, there is not only a promise to, but a *Covenant* or mutual stipulation *with Levi*, and all these threatenings and judgements consists with that *Covenant with Levi*: and tends to this, that *it may be with him*, if they make use of it. 3. It will be an aggravation of mens misery under judgements, when their conscience shall convince them, that God takes no pleasure in giving up with them, but that they have extorted and wrong strokes from his hand: *Ye shall know that I have sent this Commandment unto you, that my Covenant might be with*

Levi,

Levi, is as much as to say, your consciences shall beare me witness in your straits, that by these warnings I have used meanes to make the comforts of that Covenant forth-coming to you.

¶ Every warning given to sinners from the Word, concerning their way and the issue of it, will be sufficient to evidence that their destruction is of themselves, and that God hath no pleasure in their death: for, the sending of this Commandment, will convince that he would have his Covenant with *Levi*.

Verse 5. *My Covenant was with him of life and peace, and I gave them to him, for the feare wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my Name.*

6. *The Law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and d turne many away from iniquity.*

To clear the matter further, and shew where the fault lay, and the breach was, the Lord repeats the tenour of the Covenant, and shewes the carriage of their Ancestours, that it might be seen how far they had swerved from the rule of the Covenant, and from the example of their Progenitors. In this Covenant, the Lord not only promised long life to some of them, but generally all welfare and preservation of them in soul and body, together with such a measure of prosperity, as was meet for them, to be forth-coming for them upon their feare and reverence of God, in their person and worship, and their trembling with feare and zeale at the contempt of Gods Name in others, which was the practice of *Phinehas*, *Numb* 25. (to which here he points) occasioning that Covenant. And in this, their Progenitors studied to walk in some measure answerably, in teaching the Law holily and purely, and studying to please God, and enjoy the promised peace of the Covenant, by humble and quiet obedience to the rule of righteousness: And as they endeavoured to acquit themselves, so God blessed their labours in converting many. *Dott.* 1. It concernes them who stand under any particular obligation to God, to be much in studying both of the encouragements allowed upon them,

that they faint not in his service, and of their duty, that they delude not themselves, expecting priviledges when they minde not their work: for this end is the Covenant of *Levi*, so clearly laid before the Priests. 1. Faithful Ministers have especial need of a Covenant of preservation from God, being exposed to much hazard many times: and of the hope of eternal life, being often exercised with sad times here, and in outward things, to have the Lord securing their portion to them. And for all these may faithful Ministers trust God; for, *My Covenant was with him of life*, (that is, preservation here, and hope of a better life hereafter) *and peace* or prosperity. 3 It is a special qualification of faithful Ministers, and an evidence that they are to receive a blessing, when much familiarity with holy things doth not breed contempt, but their heart is filled with awe and reverence of God, and they go about his worship with holy reverence and trembling, and do testify much tenderness and zeal against any wrong done to God; for, *I gave them to him for the feare wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my Name*. And thus was it with *Phinchas*, *Numb. 25. 12, 13*. 4. The practice of these who have gone before, and by walking in the wayes of God, have inherited the promised blessing, will be a ditty against them who decline, and look upon their duty as intolerable, or their encouragements as hopelesse, for, the practice and blessing on former Priests are recorded, to condemn the present unfaithful ones. 5. It is incumbent to faithful Ministers, that they be neither dumb nor liars, that they oppose themselves faithfully against errour, and be faithful publishers of truth; for, *the Law of truth was in his mouth*. 6. Albeit no mortal man can be so faithful, but that if God search him, he will not be able to stand: yet it is not sufficient for a Minister, that he do not grossely debord in his calling, but he ought to carry himself so as he may abide a trial; for, he endeavoured holinesse, singlenesse and integrity in revealing the counsel of God; for, *Iniquity was not found in his lips*. 7. Albeit people are to look to the Word carried by Ministers, and obey God speaking it, whatever the Messenger be: yet it is the duty of faithful Ministers, to take heed that their carriage do not belie their doctrine, or minister occasion to bring it in contempt; but that their practice may prove their own believing of their doctrine, and that they shine in their private conversation, as well as in their publick station; for, *therefore is the walking* of

of honest Priests marked as well as their doctrine. 8. As it is the duty of all Christians, so especially of Ministers, to be constant in the wayes of godlinesse, and *walk* in them, to be sincere in them, as in the sight of God, and to be on his side of all the controversies of their time, which is to *walk with him*, to make peace with God their great aime, and for that end to be humble in their obedience, and not rebellious to occasion quarrels, which is to *walk with him in peace*, and to follow the rule of righteousness, and *walk in equity*, or *rightnesse* in all their wayes. 9. Albeit the Lords moit faithful servants, may oftentimes see cause to complain of the ill successe of their labours, *Isa. 49. 4.* partly, in that they are sometimes sent out to harden the generality of a people in Gods justice, *Isa. 6. 9.* partly, while they see not the fruit that is, as it was with *Elijah*, *1 Kings 19. 14, 18.* and partly, because the seasons of the appearing of fruits are in Gods hand; yet honest and faithful Ministers will not want such fruit of their labours, as may testify Gods approbation of them; for, *They turned many away from iniquity.*

Vetse 7. For the Priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his mouth. for he is the Messenger of the LORD of hostes.

That part of the Covenant which concerns the Priests duty, is further confirmed from a general Proposition, shewing that what their Progenitors did in practice, is the duty of all Priests, who are bound to have knowledge of the Law, and to hold out the true sense thereof to the people, who also are bound to employ them for that end, as being Gods trench-men. *Doct. 1.* Ignorance is a great sin in Ministers, who ought to be stored with knowledge literal and experimental, for the edification of others; for, *the Priests should preserve knowledge*, they should not only have it, but preserve it as a store-house for the Churches use. 2. It is not sufficient for Ministers, that they have a store of abilities and knowledge, and please themselves therewith: but they ought to be communicative, and make what they have forth-coming for the people; for, *the Priests lips should preserve knowledge.* He should so preserve it, as that it be still in his lips, bringing it forth in season and out of season as need re-

quireth. 3. Albeit all men be liars, and people are not to follow Pastors in an implicit way, but only in so far as they bring the Word of God with them: yet it is the Will of God that there be an Ordinance of Ministry, and a distinction betwixt teachers and these that are taught in the Church, and that people not only receive the Word, when it is inculcate on them, but seek to know the minde of God in his Word from them, on particular exigents; for, *They should seek the Law at his mouth.* 4. The Authority and Commission wherewith God hath clothed his Ministers, as it is an obligation upon them to adorn their station, and faithfully discharge their trust from so great a Master, without adding or diminishing: so it is an argument to perswade people to submit to the Ordinance, and reverence what they say from so absolute and great a Lord, how far soever it crosse their humours; therefore, it is subjoynd as a reason to both the Priests and peoples duty, *For he is the Messenger of the Lord of hostes.*

Verf. 8. *But ye are departed out of the way: ye have caused many to stumble at the Law; ye have corrupted the Covenant of Levi,, saith the LORD of hostes.*

Having repeated the Covenant, and declared what was the carriage of the former Priests; the Lord subjoyne a challenge for their degenerating from the rule, and from such examples: they had in effect renounced their duty, and gone out of the right way, they had not turned many from iniquity, but by their practice or false glosses, had stumbled others, and made them mistake and break their neck: and whereas others had kept the Covenant, they had violated it, and made it void on their part. *Doct. 1.* It is certain that Ministers may, and many times do erre both in doctrine and practice; and albeit it be great folly, and a snare of Satan, when people because of this will heed and regard them in nothing; yet it is high presumption in any man to pin peoples faith on his lieve, as if he were infallible; for, saith the Lord of these Priests, who had as faire promises as any, *But ye are departed out of the way, &c.* It is the fearful guilt of unfaithful Ministers, for which they must answer to God if they do not repent and amend, that where they

they do no good, they do much ill, and are neck-breakers to many: their scandalous life confirming others in their impiety, their negligence, connivance and countenancing of sinners, letting them sleep to the pit, their perverting of the Word of God, poisoning souls with errors and delusions, and their whole way making many contempt Gods Word, Ordinances and Religion, about which they are employed; *Ye have caused many to stumble at (or, in) the Law.* 3. As mens unfaithfulness is the greater, that their encouragements are singular and sure, and their obligation strict: so by proving unfaithful, they forfeit their claim to all their priviledges; for, *Ye have corrupted the Covenant of Levi*, imports, that they had sinned notwithstanding their obligation, by Covenant, and that the Covenant sufficiently encouraged them to duty; and that now they had made the Covenant void for their part. 4. It is a great aggravation of mens sins, when they degenerate from the holy example and copy that is cast by these who have gone before them; for, this challenge comes in opposition to what was said of their Progenitors, *The Law of truth was in his mouth, &c.* but ye have departed out of the way, &c.

Ver. 9. *Therefore have I also made you contemptible, and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my wayes, but have been partial in the Law.*

Hence follows their sentence and punishment, notwithstanding their pretences to the Covenant; as they had not kept Gods path, but partially wrested the Law, out of respect to men: so God had made them contemptible, and diminished their estimation among men. *Doct.* 1. Contempt is in it self a sore scourge and trial, wherewith God (as by other rods) useth to punish sin; and therefore they are not to count light of it, who inflict that rod unjustly; *I have made you contemptible*, is a sufficient scourge for wicked Priests. 2. Albeit it was the lot of Christ, the Prophets and Apostles, to be disrespected in a wicked world, and albeit such a trial may be useful to faithful Ministers, to purge out ambition and self-conceit (the weed that growes among greatest excellencies, and is an enemy to sincerity) and to make them die more to the world and studie to approve themselves

selves to God; and that by this trial, God may breed them, for
 enduring harder sufferings (the great sting whereof is shame and
 reproach) when he shall give a calling to them; yet unfaithful
 Ministers are the most contemptible crew in all the world, in
 Gods estimation, and ignominie, and contempt, is the just
 fruit of their unfaithfulness, their lot being made like their
 service, and such a lot is then a plague and judgement, when it
 is the fruit of such carriage; for, therefore have I also made you
 contemptible, and base before all the people, according as ye have
 not kept my wayes. 3. As it is a fearful sin to pervert the Word
 of God, whereof men are but dispensers, and may well testifie
 their own presumption, and delude others, but cannot alter one
 rittle of the Word in its effects, God being no respecter of per-
 sons; so it is righteous with God, that Ministers hunting after
 honour, applause and estimation, by partiality and pleasing of
 men, do by that very meane come in contempt, whereas faith-
 ful Ministers may have a testimony and respect in the conscien-
 ces of these who hate them most; for, I have made you con-
 temptible, according as ye have been partial in my Law.

Verse 10. Have we not all one Father? hath not
 one God created us? why do we deal treacherously
 every man against his brother, by prophaning the Co-
 venant of our fathers?

In the rest of the chapter, other faults common to Priests
 and people are reprov'd. And first, the Lord challenges their
 treacherous dealing one with another, which may indeed be
 well applied to the partiality of the Priests, prophaning their
 Covenant as an aggravation thereof, considering that whar-
 ever difference they make amongst men in their doctrine, for
 outward respects, yet in Gods account all these by-respects will
 vanish, and he will look on them as equal, James 2. 1, 2, &c. And
 that their partiality is treacherous and perfidious dealing to these
 whom they spare, however they think it to be favour. It may also
 be applied to that which follows, of their breach of the Covenant
 of marriage made amongst themselves, who were of one stock
 and Religion, and their marrying with idolaters. But it is more
 clear to understand it generally of unjust and fraudulent deal-
 ing in mens affaires, which is a violation of many bonds and
 relations,

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relations, being all *Abrahams* children, created and made a peculiar people to himself by the same God, having spiritual relations in following the same true Religion, making them brethren one to another, and being bound by a Covenant, (derived to them from, and oft renewed with their fathers,) to God: and among themselves, to the duties both of piety and justice.

Diss. 1. Prophaned and sleighted worship is oft-times accompanied with grosse faults against the second Table, that in these men may reade their transgression of the first, and their little considering of it, for so much doth its challenge, and the rest that ensue, following upon the former, of neglected worship, teach us. 2. Injustice in Civil-affaires, especially where it is conveyed under fraudulent pretexts, is an evil which the Lord will not bear, nor will a wakened conscience beare within it self: for, *Why do we deal treacherously, &c?* saith he, posing themselves about it. 3. As we are bound to deal justly with all, so especially it is an abomination to deal perfidiously with these to whom we are tied by many bonds of Nature and Religion; for, *Why deal we treacherously, every man against his brother, having one Father, and one God having created us?* 4. Gods entering in a Covenant with a people and Church, and continuing the priviledges thereof long with them, and making it to stand, when their provocations might justly have broken it off, is an aggravation, not only of impiety, and corrupting of worship, but even of injustice among men; for, *Why deal we treacherously in prophaning the Covenant of our fathers?* walking as prophanely as if they were not tied by Covenant, and as if a Covenant were a prophane, not a sacred thing; and as if the priviledges thereof, continued from their fathers to them, were but small things, and not obliging favours. 5. Such is the slavery that men, devoted to their lusts and idols, are brought under, that no relations or obligations will binde them up from debording; for, notwithstanding all these ties, there are *who deal treacherously*. 6. If mens consciences were acting their parts, the Lords servants might have lesse toile in discharging their duty; men would not only see their sin, but would aggrege it in its sinfulness; for, these many questions shewes, that tender consciences would plead this cause for him.

Verse 11. *Judab hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel, and in Jerusalem: for Judab hath profaned the holiness of the LORD, which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god.*

The second fault whereof both Priests and people were guilty, as the history of these times cleareth, is in the matter of marriage, wherein the chief guilt and fountain of all the rest is their marriage with idolatrous women, occasioned as appears, in that their lawful wives being out-wearied with travel, they loathed them, and fell in love with the women of the countrey. This is aggravated from the nature of the sin, the persons committing it, the place where they did it, and that it tended to a prostituting, (as a prophane thing) of their peculiar dignity, to be the Lords holy, or separated and set-apart people, and of that holiness which God required in them, and they professed to approve. *Doct.* 1. As marriage is a comfortable Ordinance of God, so especial care is to be had by the people of God, of being equally yoked, and to avoid the sin and snare of marriage with idolaters, and these of a false Religion; for, however under the Gospel, the partition-wall that was betwixt the Church, and all other Nations under the Old Testament, be pulled down; and albeit difference of Religion be no cause of dissolving a marriage under the Gospel, which is consummate, especially being made up before the Conversion of any of the parties, *1 Cor.* 7. 12, 13. yet it is still a blot and guilt for a member of the Church, to marry the daughter of a strange god, so called because of her Profession. See, *2 Cor.* 6. 14. *1 Cor.* 7. 39. and before the Law it was the sin of the old world, that the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, *Gen.* 6. 2. 2. Such as would see sin in its colours, would take it up in its aggravation, both in respect of God and men, and how abominable and perfidious it is so to do; for, so is this sin aggravated, as treacherous dealing, both against God, and their lawful wives to whom they were tied, and as abomination in the sight of God, making them abominable to whom this was forbidden. 3. The consideration of the person sinning, addes much to the aggravation of sin, and the place and time wherein they do sin, when it

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it is done by members of the Church, as it were in Gods view in his Church, and after God hath been kind to them; for, if Judah and all that now remained of Israel do thus, who shall serve him beside? and if they do it in Israel and Jerusalem, where God dwells in the midst of them, and to which they are restored after their captivity, when and where will they think it needful to omit it? 4. Scandalous and grosse sin is not acted in the visible Church, without prophaning of eminent privileges, violating of equitable obligations, and belying of many professions, all which doth aggravate it; for, all these aggravations are in this sin, as the words are before explained; Judah hath prophaned the holinesse of the Lord, which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange God.

Verse 12. *The LORD will cut off the man that doth this: the Master and the Scholar out of the Tabernacles of Jacob, and him that offereth an offering unto the LORD of hostes.*

The Lord threatens for this sin, that he will cut off the guilty and impenitent from among his people and worshippers, either by excommunication or extraordinary judgements, whether they be Nobles or Commons, Teachers or Scholars, Masters or Servants, (the one of which hath power to *awaken*, and the other is bound to *answer*, as it is in the Original) or Priests, who stood in Gods Courts to do him service, or people who thought all well if they performed outward Ceremonial worship: This threatening seems in part to relate to a faction of Priests and others, who for these marriages were separated from the Church of the Jewes, and went among the Samaritanes, and built a Temple on Mount *Gerizim*, of whom some hint is given, *Nehem. 13. 28. Doct. 1.* To be upon just grounds cut off from the society of Gods Church and people, is a sad judgement; for so it is threatened, *They shall be cut off from the tabernacles of Jacob.* 2. Just excommunication is in effect but a judicial giving up of men to the way which they have chosen, and a declaration of what they were in effect, while they lurked within the visible Church; for, *Cutting off from the Tabernacles of Jacob*, is but a leaving of them to the way wherein they walked, when they married the daughter of a
strange

strange god. 3. As God is the Author of every just censure, inflicted by his Church, and doth ratifie it in heaven, so where other punishments are necessary, and men either lie by, or are not able, God will take the punishment in his own hand; for, in excommunication God cuts off, and in other judgements the Lord will cut off, &c. 4. God will punish sin impartially, without respect to persons or dignities, and will not be turned away by outward performances of worship, while there is not repentance and reformation; for, *The Lord will cut off the Master, and the Scholar, and him that offereth an offering, who doth this.*

Verf. 13. *And this have ye done again, covering the Altar of the LORD with teares, with weeping and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good Will at your hand.*

This fault is further aggreated from a sinfull effect following upon it, to wit, their afflicting of their lawfull wives, by taking in other wives in their time, to afflict them, *Lev. 18. 18.* by their sleighting of them in respect of the strange women, and by divorces, (as is after cleared) who being thus oppressed did runne to God, and because it was not regarded and amended, therefore God did not regard their service, as if the Altar were covered with the teares and cries of their oppressed wives to hinder their acceptance; otherwise it is not properly to be conceived that they got liberty to come to the Altar, or to poure out their teares upon it. And that it is to be understood of this mourning of their wives, hindering their acceptance, is cleare from the following verse, where the reason of Gods rejecting them is held forth. *Doct. 1.* As ordinarily one sinne drawes on another till there be no end; so addition of sinne to sinne, is a great aggravation thereof; *And this ye have done again. 2.* It is a mans saddest disadvantage, when he gives to any just occasion to crie to God against him, and the best remedy to be had of any wrong, is, when we commit it to God by prayer; *This ye have done covering the Altar, with teares, with weeping, and with crying.* This was their afflicted wives refuge, and their husbands

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bands did it against themselves, when they gave their wives just occasion. 3. As family-discord is a great hindrance to worship, and to access to God in it; so neglect of duty in our several relations will not be gotten skinned over, by performances of worship, but will hinder acceptance therein; for, when they wrong their wives and make them trie to God, *He regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will (or, with pleasure) at your hands.*

Verſ. 14. Yet ye ſay, Wherefore? Becauſe the LORD hath been witneſſe between thee and the wife of thy youth, againſt whom thou haſt dealt treacherouſly; yet is ſhe thy companion, and the Wife of thy covenant.

Becauſe the husbands might be ready to deny ſome of theſe challenges, or to extenuate them, as no relevant ground for rejecting their ſervice and worſhip. Therefore the Lord layes forth the ſinne of their carriage toward their wives, and aggregates it as a wrong againſt God, who was preſident and witneſſe in the Covenant of marriage, and to whom the oath was made, and therefore cannot but avenge the wrong, and as being treacherous dealing to the wife, who was the mans firſt love from his youth, who hath right to him by Covenant and ſworne promiſe, and being by the tie of marriage the companion and halfe of the man, with whom he is one fleſh. *Doct. 1.* Men may be in an evil condition, and yet be little convinced or ſenſible of it, or of the high provocation that is in it; and that it may juſtly make ſervice abominable: *Yet ye ſay, Wherefore?* wherefore ſhould not our ſervice be accepted? *2.* God hath an eſpecial intereſt, and is a party in every lawfull paſſion, which is confirmed by an oath, and eſpecially in the Covenant of marriage, wherein he obſerves wrongs, who are chiefly guilty; and will accordingly puniſh; *The Lord hath been witneſſe between thee and thy wife, againſt whom thou haſt dealt treacherouſly.* *3.* Where the Lord hath tied parties in marriage, continuance of conjunction ought to increaſe and ſettle affection, and incident infirmities and blemiſhes ought not to alienate it; for, *She is the wife of thy youth*, married to thee from thy youth, and therefore it is not ſeemly to ſee her deſpiſed now, and was thy choice

in thy youth and hers, and therefore not seemly to contemne her, when age and infirmity alters her. 4. As marriage makes man and woman no more two but one flesh, so it is the duty of wives to prove comfortable yoke-fellows and helpers, not hinderers of their husbands good; and husbands are to intimate them as companions and not slaves: *Yet she is thy companion.* 5. Marriage duties are not left arbitrary to parties, whether they will performe them or not, but by the mutual Covenant, they have given power of their bodies each to other, and are strictly tied to performe the mutual duties required in such a state of life without revocation; *She is the wife of thy Covenant;* and therefore, neither to be rejected, neglected, nor another taken with her.

Verf. 15. *And did not he make one? yet had he the residue of the spirit: and wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed: therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deale treacherously against the wife of his youth.*

The Lord confirms the challenge yet further, and shewes particularly the sinne of their carriage: And first, concerning polygamie, or taking more wives at once, and bringing in of strange women upon their lawfull wives, he declares it to be against the institution of marriage, wherein God, who had breath and spirit enough to make more women for one man, did only create one man and one woman, that so there might be a lawfull issue procreated in lawfull marriage. Hence he exhorts them to keep inviolable the tie of marriage, and for this end to guard their own hearts, and let the salvation of their precious spirits perswade them to this duty. *Doct. 1.* In all things wherein a controversie occurs about what is sinne or duty, right or wrong, we are not to dwell on custome, practice or pretences, but to recur to Gods institution and appointment, to which all reasonings must submit; for, thus is the controversie of marriage decided. 2. Whatever have been, or may be the customes of men, yet by Gods institution, both in precept and practice, lawfull marriage is only betwixt one man and one woman: and this conjunction, the wisdom of God (who might easily have done otherwise,) hath thought most convenient for the

the ends to be attained by marriage-society, to which experience in all ages hath subscribed: *Did he not make one? and yet he had the residue of the spirit.* 3. One and the chief lawful end of marriage is, the hope of posterity, that man who cannot abide alwayes on earth, may in a sort perpetuate himself in his posterity, while the world endureth, one end of marriage is, *to seeke a seed.* 4. Such children as are brought forth in a state of lawful marriage, have an excellencie, which others begotten in uncleannesse want; for, however grace be free to the one as well as the other; yet it is in itself a dignity and priviledge of men above beasts to be thus procreate; *therefore be made one, that he might seeke a godly seed, or, seed of God;* that is, (as the Original imports) an excellent seed, having that excellencie of being lawfully begotten. 5. Reproof would be accepted from God for use, and that not only for conviction, but for reformation; *Therefore (saith he) let none deal treacherously,* &c. 6. If mens spirits were precious, or their salvation dear unto them, it might keep off many sinful courses which endanger them; *Take heed to your spirits, and let none deal treacherously,* may import this, that their precious spirits are at the stake in this businesse. 7. Men who would keep from sinful out-breakings, should watch over their own hearts, where the rise of them is, and should take heed that abilities do not deceive them with excusing or extenuating their faults; *Take heed to your spirits,* may import further, that their lustful spirits are the spring of all this miscarriage. and therefore to be heeded especially, and that mens spirits are dangerous patrons of the evils, which their affections are enslaved to.

Verse 16. *For the LORD the God of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hostes; therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.*

Secondly, concerning divorces, which was their next shift, when they could not get both wives kept, they found means to put away their old wives. The Lord declares that to be hateful to him, as not being a quiteing of their violence to their wives,

wives, but an executing of it under that pretext of Law, and so but a covering it as with a garment; and again exhorts them to purge and watch over their spirits. *Doff.* 1. Whatever the Lord did permit for the hardnesse of *Israels* heart, yet divorce and loosing of that marriage tie upon trivial causes, or any other cause beside that of adultery, *Mat.* 19. 9. and malicious desertion, *1 Cor.* 7. 15. is a sin, and hateful to God; *For the Lord saith that he hateth putting away.* 2. Not only doth the authority of God prohibit groundlesse divorces, but his own carriage toward his confederate and married people, in not giving up with them for every fault, shewes how displeasing such courses are to him in others: for, not only *the Lord*, but *the God of Israel* saith this; his not ceasing to be the God of *Israel*, shewes how unsuitable it is to his mind to break off marriage-affection. 3. The nature of sinful courses are not changed, but only daubed over, when they are acted under pretence of Law, and therefore are so much the more hateful to God; for, *the Lord hates putting away, as covering violence with a garment.* This forme of speech covering with a garment, or (as some read it) *violence covering the garment*, seemeth to allude to the Scripture-expression, wherein covering with the garment, signifieth conjugal protection, *Ezek.* 16. 8. *Ruth* 3. 9. and so while they spread their garment over another wife, they covered that violence with a pretext of divorce, and violence covered that act of marrying another: it was but violence, though they pretended to have law for the marriage after divorce. 4. The Lords frequent challenges ought to stir up men to double diligence in reforming their way, it being a double guiltinesse to sin after admonition: and such as would reforme sin, must first see their spirit polluted, and begin their reformation there; for this cause is the exhortation repeated; *therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.*

Verse 17. *Ye have wearied the LORD with your words: yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doth evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delighteth in them, or where is the God of judgement?*

The third fault reproved, is their impatiencie under affliction⁸, breaking forth into murmuring and blasphemie against God and his Providence, as judging, that because enemies and wicked men prospered more then they did, either God did approve of wicked men, and delight in their sin, or else was not a just and impartial Judge, or had no Providence at all in the world. This carriage did grieve Gods Spirit, albeit they either denied the fact, or that it was *his* sin to compass *Deft.* 1. Hard times drive on temptations unto Atheisme, and may prevail with many in the visible Church, as this example teacheth. 2. Temptations unto Atheisme begin ordinarily at the matter of Gods Providence in the world, and first, it carves out a Providence to mens own *state*, that God loves none, but whom he deals kindly with in matters of the world, and that he *delights* in such as he spares outwardly. Then it falls a quarrelling under crosse dispensations, that his providence is not just, when every one that is *evil* is good in the sight of the Lord. And at last comes to an expresse denying of providence, and consequently of God. *Where is the God of judgement?* 3. Temptations of impatiencie and Atheisme, arising from crosse dispensations, do flow from too much conceit of mens selves and their *deservings*, and prove them not meane in their own eyes, as humbled under the rod, for while they quarrel his goodness to others that *do evil* it imports they look on themselves as good, and deserving no such usage as they meet with. 4. Impatiencie and quarrelling of Gods Providence is a vexing evil, which the Lord will not endure, especially when men are not wrastring against it in their bosomes, but let it break out in expression without controulment. *Ye have wearied the Lord with your words, Isa. 40. 27.* He cannot properly wearie, but will do with such, as wearied men do with an insupportable burden. 5. Men falling in a quarrelling disposition prove themselves to be deprived of tendernesse, and in an ill frame of spirits, in that they can neither discern what they are doing, nor be sensible of the hainousness of such an evil, which a tender heart would tremble at, for, these murmurers have the boldness and audacity to reply to the challenge. *Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him?*

CHAP. III.

IN the first part of this Chapter, we have a Prophecie of Christs coming in the flesh, v. 1. who would be found far otherwise then many of them looked for; in refining his Church, v. 2. purging of his people and Ministers, that their worship may be pure and acceptable, v. 3. 4. and in manifesting of all wickednesse, and taking order with it, v. 5. the reason of which beneficence is his unchangeable grace, and the constancy of his promise toward his people, v. 6. In the second part of the chapter, he accuseth them of desperate impenitencie in their defection, v. 7. of sacrilege, v. 8. (which as it was a special cause of the judgements lying on them, v. 9. so upon their repentance and amendment, he undertakes remarkably to blesse them, v. 10, 11, 12.) and of blasphemie and wearying in Gods service, v. 13, 14, 15. In the third part of the Chapter we have the carriage of the godly in such a time, and the fruit of these doctrines upon them, v. 16. — who are encouraged from Gods observation, and laying up their carriage as upon record, v. — 16. from a promise of being precious in Gods sight, and graciously and tenderly dealt with, v. 17. and thus the difference betwixt the godly and wicked in Gods esteem, shall in due time be made manifest, v. 18.

Verse 1. *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the LORD whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple: even the messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hostes.*

In this Prophecie of Christs coming, first Christ speaks himself, and promisseth to send John Baptist as his fore-runner and Harbinger, (as is expounded, Luke 1. 76. and 7. 17. Mat. 11. 10.

Mark

Mat. 1. 2.) who by the doctrine of repentance and of grace to be given to the penitent through Christ, should prepare the way for the exhibition of Christ: Then the Father speaks, and promises that Christ the Messenger of the Covenant, whom the Jewes longed so much after, should shortly after *John's* preaching, come into his Temple (being exhibited in the flesh;) and preach the Gospel there, *Doct. 1.* The love of God in Christ toward the world, will not be impeded by the wickedness of men; nor will he make void his promises of the redemption and salvation of his Elect, because of the perversity of many in the visible Church, therefore, notwithstanding their quarrellings, *chap. 2. 17.* Christ is here promised. 2. Convincing evidences of Christ's Godhead do appear in this Prophecie; as first, that he was before his Incarnation, keeping intercourse with, and making promises to his Church; *Behold, I will send, &c.* Secondly, that he authorizeth and sendeth messengers into his Church in his Name, and upon his errands: *I will send my messenger to prepare my way.* Thirdly, that he is Lord of the Temple of Jerusalem, and he to whom homage was payed there, it is his Temple. Fourthly, that when he appears in the forme of a servant, a worme and not a man, *David's* son and a small twig out of *Jesse's* root, yet he is under all that vail; *The LORD*, and above all. Fifthly, that he and his Father are about one, and the same work, speaking in the same promise, as being one in essence, though distinct persons. *Doct. 3.* As Christ when he comes to any person or people must be received as a King, (for Kings have their Harbingers going before them) so men are by nature unprepared for the receiving of Christ, having so many obstructions laid in his way, being so unworthy of such a mercy, and having (in their own conceit) so little employment for such a Saviour: and men would still continue so, unless Christ who freely gives himself, do also freely prepare his own way, so much doth this promise: *I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me*, import. 4. It is a sweet fore-runner of Christ's coming, when he sends a Ministry amongst a people, and causeth the Ministry to take place, especially in convincing of sin, and shewing the necessity of repentance; for thus was *John* in his Ministry a fore-runner of Christ's Incarnation. 5. Christ's Incarnation and dwelling in our flesh, and his presence hereby in his Church, is the sweet and refreshful encouragement of his

people, the riches whereof will not be seen at first view; therefore is the promise doubled, and men called to consider it: *The Lord shall come, behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hostes.* 6. As it is the high privilege of the Church to be singled out among all the world, to enjoy Christ and the fruits of his coming: so it behoved the true Messiah to be incarnate, while the second Temple stood, and to come and preach there; for, *the Lord shall come to his Temple,* is a Prophecie of his being present in the material Temple, as a type of his Church, to which all his special manifestations are. 7. As it is a double mercie when the Lord makes great dispatch in performing promises, considering the long attendance others have been put to: so where the Ministry of the Word, and repentance have place, it is a token the Lord is hastening to manifest more of himself: *The Lord shall suddenly come,* partly, in respect the time betwixt this Prophecie and his exhibition was to be short, considering how long he had been expected before: and partly after *Johns* preaching, and its having place, he should come upon a sudden. 8. Albeit Christ be God over all, blessed for ever, yet he took upon him the office of Mediatour and Ambassadors of his Father to the Church, and having obtained of his Father, by the Covenant of Redemption, that a Covenant of reconciliation should be betwixt God and man, he came into the world to make offer thereof in preaching the Gospel, and to confirm it by his own blood: and he it is who from time to time perswades the Elect to embrace the conditions of the Covenant, and doth make the Covenant sure to them who flee to him as Mediatour for that end; and confirms the faith of such as rest on the Covenant with many proofes of his love. *This Lord, who comes, is even the messenger of the Covenant,* and in all these respects, he proves himself so. 9. As Christ ought to be, and is unto his peculiar people, their chief desire and joy, and his presence; or hope of future manifestations of him, their life: so many may pretend much respect to Christ at a distance, in hope of satisfaction to some lusts by him, and may be so impatient in expectation, that if God delay his coming, they will scarcely have hope to see him at all, and yet mistake him when he comes: for, Christ is *the Lord whom they sought, and delighted in,* who were not only the godly among them, whose hearts longed for his Incarnation, but even the wicked, as hoping to get temporal felicity by him, and who therefore quarrelled

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called God for delaying to send him. These the Lord promises to make liars, but liars to their advantage.

Vest. 2. *But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiners fire, and like fullers sope.*

Followes a prediction of the effects of Christs coming, which was begun when he came in the flesh to the material Temple, and is verified daily when he comes to his Church in the power of the Gospel, to reform it, and to governe and rule in it. In general, it is declared that Christ will be quite another thing then hypocrites dream, he will be such a winnower and purger, as it will be hard to abide his trial, which will be as fire to purge drosse, and as sope to wash away filth. Thus was his fan in his hand, Mat. 3. 12, and his scourge, John 2. 14, 16, and his axe laid to the root of the tree. *Diss. 1.* Christ manifested in the flesh, and coming even in his low estate, is a terrible sight to his enemies, and will be a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to many, for, *who may abide the day of his coming? and who may stand?* *Exe. 2.* Christs coming to his Church in the Ministry of his Gospel, and to carry on a Reformation, makes a time prove very winnowing, and a trying time, and so hard to be endured, that it is a wonder to see any get through in it: and no wonder if we consider the many hypocrites in his Church, and the great hypocrisie and drosse of his Saints which he cannot endure, the great vicissitudes and shakings that attend a time of Reformation; the many errors and delusions that usually are aloft then; the efficacy of the Ministry of the Gospel in discovering of sin, by which if men be not amended they grow worse; the civil turne prophane, the formal loose, and the prophane insolent: and how speedily a people under the Gospel fill up the measure of their sin, and ripen for many judgements; for these causes it is, that Christs coming is held out as so terrible a day; *Who may abide? who shall stand?* 3. Not only is there much unsoundnesse to be found in Christs Church, but this is ill to discern till Christ discover it, and it cleaves close to men, that it is ill to remove for, no lesse then a *refiners fire, and fullers sope*, can either discover this drosse in the metall, and filth in the cloath, or re-

move it away, his fan only can discover the chaffe, and take it away. 4. Christ hath power sufficient to purge his Church, and reach the dross, and is so zealous that he will not spare, and will either consume altogether, or separate the dross away; for, *He is as a refiners fire, and like fullers sope.*

Verse 3. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purifie the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

4. Then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

The particular effects of Christs coming and office in respect of the godly, is the purging of them; his publick worship and Ministers, that for their worship may be cleanly and acceptable, all things being restored to their integrity. *Doct. 1.* The purest Church of Christ is so ready to contract pollution within time, that purging is needful, and the choice people of God who are not to be destroyed, will need purging, as having much dross; and it is their comfort that he intends only their purging, how hot soever the furnace be; for, unto his Church he is a refiner, and will purifie. 2. As Christs purging of his Church, by his Word, Spirit and rod, speaks his love; and a purpose of much good; for, he sits at it as his task, that his heart is upon, and purifies as gold and silver, precious metals refined for honourable use: so must the godly submit to his way of purging, either for the time, though he sit at it as a work not to be soon done, or for the measure of it, though it sear them as silver and gold. is sought by the fire, as knowing that he sits at the furnace, and that he will still make it appear his refining is not with silver, as to the heat and extremity of the trial, *Isa. 48. 10.* 3. Christs coming under the Gospel, tends not to the destruction of a Ministry, though they need indeed to be oft purged; for, *He shall purifie the sons of Levi.* 4. As pure ordinances, and an offering in righteousness, according to the rule, and through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, is a choice mercy of Christs Church: So the mercy is completed, when that

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that is joynd with personal reformation, when there are purified Levites, and an offering in righteousness: and it is personal renovation and reconciliation that sets men on the way of pure service, and right service must begin there; He shall purifie the sons of Levi, that they may offer an offering in righteousness.

4. An holy Ministry is an especial blessing to the Church, for keeping Ordinances pure, and for being instrumental to promote purity among people, and setting them on a pure and acceptable way of worship; for, when the sons of Levi are purified, they offer in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem are pleasant unto the Lord. 6. As we are not to please our selves with what we do in service, unlesse God accept of it; so the only way of acceptable worship is through Christ, when he takes any in his hand, and translates them out of their polluted condition, and makes them and their service (which in it self is abominable) well-pleasing through him; for, when he comes and purifieth his people, then shall the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord. 7. Christ by his coming in the flesh, and his death and Gospel is the restorer of all things, and the substance of all excellencies unto them that close with him; for, to be pleasant as in the dayes of old, and as in former years, imports not only that their service shall be acceptable, as of old when most godly men offered; but that all the remarkable proofs of favour manifested toward them, and wondered at in their fathers dayes, as the free reward of their service, are really to be given to the godly in and by Christ.

Verse 5. And I will come near to you to judgement, and I will be a swift witnesse against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppresse the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherlesse, and that turne aside the stranger from his right, and feare not me, saith the LORD of hostes.

The effect of Christs coming and office, in respect of the wicked, (uttered here again by Christ himself, that we may remember he is the same God with the Father) is, that he will

appear and enter in judgement with them; and for that end manifested all wickednesse against the first and second Table, (whereof he names some most frequent amongst them) that he may take order with them; and so by this threatening he refutes their calumnie, chap. 2. 17. *Doct. 1.* Albeit Christs principal end in his Incarnation and coming in the Gospel, be not to condemn, but to save; yet by reason of mens corruption it proves a judgement to many in the visible Church, and not only by the furnace of reformation casts them out of the Church, but cuts them off by judicial punishment's mediate or immediate, as an earnest of their eternal judgement; and this may imbitter such a case, that what is ordained to life should be found to death; *I will come near* (whereas ye think I stand afar off, yet I will appear, and come so near as may reach you) to judgement. 2. However men who are deepest engaged in sin, are hardest to convince oft-times; yet as Christs sees all sin by his vigilant Providence, and by the Ministry of the Word discovers and layes open sin in its colours, and by the power thereof, will make corrupt men by their own practice, write their naughtinesse upon their own forehead; so his Word charging home guilt, can make the consciences of the most obstinate plead against themselves, frame their own processe, and justify his judgements threatened or inflicted on them; *And I will be a witnesse*, saith he, which imports their blindness, and what the effects of Christs coming shall be. 3. Sins do ripen quickly under the Gospel to a measure of impiety, and speedily fit for judgement; *I will be a swift witnesse*, saith Christ. 4. As the visible Church is oft-times guilty of monstrous abominations, both against the first and second Table, (none being more corrupt then they who ought to be best, and will not) which call aloud for vengeance; so the root of all these is, the want of the feare of God; for, here are *forerers, adulterers, &c.* and all summed up in this, *and fear not me, saith the Lord of hostes.*

Verse 6. *For I am the LORD, I change not: therefore ye sonnes of Iacob are not consumed.*

The reason of the preceding Prophecie is fetched from Gods unchangeablenesse, and his immutable grace and constancie in
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his promise, which preserves Israel, and brings about these mercies of sending Christ unto them, and his purging and restoring his ordinances; and is the cause of constant kindness toward the Elect, who otherwise do so often provoke him to destroy them; and it meets also with their quarrelling him, that he would not prove a God of judgement; for that would have consumed them, (considering their temper, as is hinted, v. 5.) which out of his unchangeable purpose of love to them, as his people he had hitherto forborne. *Doff.* 1. Men may be quarrelling a dispensation, which yet it is their great mercy to enjoy; and may quarrel Gods not appearing in a sad time, whereas if he did appear, it would consume themselves: thus did they quarrel and complain without cause, as is before explained. 2. God is immutable in his nature, essence, properties and purposes, as having being from himself, and being independent on all other who might overway him, and infinite in wisdom that needs no after-thoughts; and albeit he may change his dispensations, yet his purposes stand firme, and are carried on unalterably by various and contrary means; *I am Jehovah, I change not.* 3. There is no Church or people of God, but in themselves they are worthy to be consumed, considering their inherent sinfulness, their daily provocations and inconstancy in any good; and the worthlessness of their best things: and any forbearance they enjoy is from a cause without them: for, *if the sonnes of Jacob are not consumed, it is not of themselves, but of God.* 4. Such as God hath chosen to himself of his free grace to be his people, may in the midst of their inconstancy and failings, (when they are sensible of them, and driven to Christ by them) comfort themselves in the immutability of Gods love, which alters not as their condition alters: and whatever the Lords dealing to them be, they may reckon that it flows from no change of purpose in him, who is still the same, and that he intends not to destroy or reject them; so did the Church of Israel, having a peculiar promise made, and so will all the Elect finde; *I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sonnes of Jacob are not consumed.*

Vorse 7. Even from the dayes of your fathers, ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you,

ye, saith the LORD of hostes: But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

In the second part of the chapter, the Lord challenges them, and contests with them for several faults, which may prove that it came of him that they were not consumed. The first fault challenged is their defection, and their rebellion and impenitency in it. However that Nation had continued in a long trade of sin, the posterity subscribing to their fathers sins, by following their footsteps; yet the Lord offered upon their repentance, to be reconciled unto them, and to grant them the wonted signes of his favour, taking away the tokens of his anger, but they would not be convinced of any need of repentance, and so denied the accusation, and rejected the exhortation and encouragement. *Diff.* 1. New defections do justly bring former iniquities, and a trade of sin to remembrance, that men may see the sad fruit of giving once way to sin, and what a judgement is on them who think little of all these sins, and that they may be an aggravation of present sins, as filling up the measure of former iniquities: *Even from the dayes of your fathers, ye are gone away from my Ordinances.* 2. As Apostasie from former professions and engagements by new sin, doth adde much to the sin; so Apostasie from the wayes of God will easily follow on, not serious walking in them, as being near a kin to it: *Ye have gone away by apostasie, from mine Ordinances, and have not kept them.* 3. It sets out the great mercy of God, that after much apostasie, he offers reconciliation upon repentance, and this offer doth highly aggravate impenitency: *Return to me, and I will returne to you, saith the Lord of hostes.* 4. It is an ordinary plague and judgement upon them who are deepest engaged in sin, that the custome of sin makes them that they consider not that they do evil, that they see least need of repentance, and are most hardly convinced: *But ye said, Wherein shall we return?*

Verse 8. *Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me: But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.*

The second fault challenged, (which proves the general challenge, and answers their reply, v. 7.) is their sacrilege in withholding tithes from the Priests, and offerings from the Temple, whereof the Priests had a share for their maintenance. This the Lord accounts robbing of him, which no Pagan would do to his idol. *Doct.* 1. It is the Will of God, that his publick worship be upheld, and that these who are set apart for the publick worship of God, be maintained thereby: and who so do withhold that are guilty of grossest defection, as overturning the whole publick worship and Ordinances of God at one stroke; for, he proves that challenge, v. 7. *of going away from his Ordinances*, by withholding *tithes and offerings*. 2. To withhold maintenance from the Ministers of the Word, is a robbing of God; for, not only where that is withheld, his service is sleighted also, *tithes and offerings* go together; but it is an affronting of God, who hath commanded the contrary, a depriving him of that which is consecrated to him, and dedicated to his publick worship, and an affronting of his service, as if it were not worth any expence, and so making men to faint in it, *Ye have robbed me in tithes and offerings*. 3. Men may be doing great injuries to God, when yet they will not see it, nor apprehend how much God is reflected on by their way, or how deep their iniquity draweth; for, so doth their exception to the challenge import; *Yet ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee?* 4. The respect that Pagans have to their idols, and their care to uphold service unto them, will condemn many who profess to serve the true and living God, and yet neither have respect nor love to him, nor have any care to maintain and uphold his worship: *Will a man rob God?* any thing he counts a god; and yet ye have robbed me.

Verse 9. *Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole Nation.*

10. *Bring ye all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hostes, if I will not open you the windowes of heaven, and poure you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.*

11. *And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes: and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine cast her fruit before her time in the field, saith the LORD of hostes.*

12. *And all Nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hostes.*

He declares that because of this sin, God had cursed them with a general want, and exhorts them to amend this fault, promising to give a proof that his accusation hath been just and that their repentance and amending their fault should be acceptable, by giving them raine and the influences of heaven, to cause the earth to bring forth in abundance: and by removing impediments of a fruitful harvest, by keeping off destroying creatures, and preventing their trees from untimely casting their fruit. So that Gods blessing should be so conspicuous upon them, as should take away their reproach of being a Nation plagued of God. *Doct. 1.* People never thrive the better, that they neglect Gods service, and think to increase their stock by withholding what is due from Gods servants, but are ordinarily served in their own coynt, and plagued with as much want as they drive his servants to; and however, they are certainly pursued with a curse in all that they have, which can soon overspread a whole Kingdome? *Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole Nation.* 2. It is the duty of these who would uphold Gods service, not only to give what is requisite for maintenance of the Ministers thereof, but to do it voluntarily, and so as Ministers may be free of distractions from their great work; *Bring, saith he, the tithes into the store-house.* 3. If men would repent and amend their sinful courses, they might meet with such proofes of Gods favour, as would convince them that they had forsaken their own mercy formerly, though they would not see it; and that much of God is to be found of these who wait on him in his own way for it: for, the Lord submits to a trial from experience, if these quarrellers would leave their debates, and put him to it; *Let there be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, if I will not open upon you the windowes of heaven, &c.* 4. Many steps
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of divine Providence and care, may be read in our very daily bread and plentiful provision; The opening of the windows of heaven, and pouring out of a blessing, the rebuking of the devourers from destroying fruits, when the influences of heaven have produced them; and keeping of trees from casting fruit before the time, shewes how many wayes an angry God can reach sinners in these things, how richly he can provide for his creatures, and how sufficiently secure it to them. 5. As Gods blessing upon his reconciled people, will be conspicuous and remarkable; so the very reproach of being under Gods judgements, ought to affect the sinner, and be a motive to repentance and reformation, that God may roll away that reproach as he is ready to do; for, it is an argument to invite them who are under a curse, to turn from their evil wayes: *All Nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightsome land.*

Verse 13. *Your words have been stout against me, saith the LORD: yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?*

14. *To have said, It is vaine to serve God: and what profit is it, that we have kept his Ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hostes?*

15. *And now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickednesse are set up, yea, they that tempt God, are even delivered.*

The third fault reprov'd, (wherein they shewed much presumption) is their murmuring and wicked blasphemie, accounting it a vaine thing to serve God, because they who pretended to obey God, and walk humbly under sin or judgements in some ceremonial performances, were not answered according to their lusts; and blessing the grossely wicked, because when they went the very length of tempting God in their wickedness, yet they escaped trouble and were exalted. Doct. 1. It is a presumptuous and bold course, when men dare not only secretly murmur against God, his Providence and their duty, but dare openly publish and avow such mistakes, and reject conviction

victims for it as a sin, *Your words have been stout: yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?* 2. As it is desperate presumption for men to cast out with pietie: for the Lord will have every one that serves him tried in their sincerity, and whether or not any thing will drive them on such a snare, for here, these who pretended to much service, spake stoutly and said, *It is vaine to serve God.* 3. It is a character of true pietie, when men do indeed cleave close to the revealed Will of God, and yet are humble for all they do, when they are humbled for their short-comings, and do stoop and mourne under any corrections, considering the greatnesse and power of God with whom they have to do, for, this is true pietie which they pretend to, *to keep his ordinance, and walk mournfully before the Lord of hostes.* 4. It is a great evidence of unsoundnesse when men despise pietie and the way of God, because of the want of outward successe, as if pietie and a good conscience were not a reward to it self, and as if it were not fir that God purged his own people, that they might bring forth more fruit: *They accounted it vaine to serve God, for, what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?* &c. 5. It is also a great evidence of unsoundnesse, when men see too well their own performances, and are proud of them: and this conceit is the cause of mens quarrelling when their lots please them not, for, these complainers see their own worth, and what they did, and because of this complaine, whereas mens humility loseth the lustre where they see it, and swell with it. 6. It may please the Lord for a snare to sinners, and a trial to others, and that none may doat on outward things, not only to deliver sinners out of troubles, but when they come to the height of impiety, as not to own God, or tempt and put him to it, to make that a meanes of advancement; for, *They that work wickednesse are set up, and they that tempt God are even delivered.* 7. The prosperity of wicked men in wicked courses is a trial of sincerity, and will readily draw unsound hypocrites not only to be discouraged in what of Religion they pretend to, but openly to side with impiety as the only blessed way; *We call the proud happy,* &c.

Verse 16. *Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another, and the LORD hearkened and heard*

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heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his Name.

Followeth the carriage of the truly godly in that time, and the fruit these reproofs had on them, together with the encouragements allowed upon them, whereby these hypocritical boasters are refuted, in that there are truly godly beside them, who finde profit by it indeed. Their carriage is mutual conference and exhortations to repentance, which the Lord for their encouragement took pleasure to observe, and to put upon record for their behoof. *Doff.* 1. True pietie will keep its feet in worst times, and when Atheism most abounds, and in times of greatest reeling the Lord will still have a remnant to cleave to him; for, even then there are *who fear the Lord.* 2. Communion of Saints in mutual conference and admonition, being held within the bounds of mens station, and tending to strengthen against the tentations of the time, and not made an engine to ensnare and draw men to them, is a necessary duty, and an especial meanes of life in a declining time; *They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another.* 3. Albeit the Lord do not alwayes openly reward piety, yet he takes especial notice of his Saints way, yea, even of every word they speak for him, especially in an evil time, and layeth it up to be forth-coming for them: and it may be encouragement sufficient to the godly man, that the Lord takes so much pleasure in it, and will not forget it; *The Lord bearkened and heard, as one taking pleasure) and a book of remembrance was written before him for them.* 4. Such as would fear God indeed, and be useful in the duties of mutual edification, ought to have frequent and high thoughtes of God in their hearts, according as he hath revealed himself, without which piety will soon become cold, and resolve in formality; for, *They that feared the Lord, thought upon his Name.*

Verse 17. *And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hostes, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare him, as a man spareth his own sonne that serveth him:*

The godly are further encouraged from a promise, that they shall be precious in Gods sight, and shall find the fruit of piety, and his affection, in the day of his appearing to judgement, in order either within time, or at the last judgment; and that they shall be tenderly dealt with, and their failings passed over, as a Parent passes over an escape in an obedient son. *Deut. 1.* As the Lord hath a peculiar people in the world, who are precious and dear to him; so he hath his appointed time when in he will visibly manifest this, and prove his affection by asserting them out of misery, and setting them in a state of happiness; for, he hath *jewels*, and a *day to show them*. 2. It does richly make up a godly man's heart, that he hath a peculiar interest in God in his heart and affection, that whenever become of him, he is still precious in the Lords sight, and that all will end in a publick testimony of Gods favour, *They shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.* 3. Increase of the grace and Spirit of adoption, to serve God sincerely, is a sweet reward of piety and encouragement to a godly man; for, they shall be *sons that serve him*. 4. Remission and forbearance is the most godly mans choice priviledge, without which he could not stand, considering his manifold infirmities: *I will spare them*, in their encouragement. 5. Such as study to walk sincerely and tenderly, may expect (not because of their merit, but because of Gods love through Christ) to be graciously dealt with, their iniquities not being imputed but blotted out, and their infirmities passed by, that what remains of their service may be accepted; *I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.*

Verse 18. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.

It is further promised, for the encouragement of the godly and conviction of the murmurers, that both of them shall know by experience what difference there is in God's treatment betwixt the godly and the wicked; partly, when the Lord, within time, shall be pleased to put visible marks of his favour upon the one, and of his displeasure upon the other, as

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Exod. 14. 30. but especially when the eternal felicity of the one, and torments of the other shall be made manifest. 1. Albeit the godly may have oft-times their own feares and mistakes of God and his way, and the wicked their delusions and false confidences; yet the Lord hath a time wherein to bring them to themselves, and present things in their right colours, and cause the greatest mistaker and strongest presumper change his judgement of things; *Then shall ye return and discern.* 2. However there be great mistakes in the visible Church, concerning true piety, many pretending to it, boasting of it, and quarrelling God because he takes not notice of them as such, who are indeed but proud hypocrites: and however God hide his true Saints in respect of outward dispensations, that they cannot be discerned from others in the world, but many a time are most hardly dealt with, whom he loves best; yet in due time the Lord will distinguish betwixt true and counterfeit godlinesse, and discover the seen advantage of piety: and the bitter fruit of ungodlinesse: *Ye shall discern between the righteous and the wicked.* 3. The godly, whom the Lord will own for such, and put marks of his favour upon, are such as have fled to Christ, to be righteous by imputation of his righteousness, and study righteousness in their conversation, and give themselves up to God, to be employed at his command, as not being their own; *They are the righteous and serve God.* And these whom he will plague are such, as rejecting Christ and his righteousness, continue in their wicked estate by nature, and are given up to bring forth that wickedness upon all occasions, and do in effect live as if there were not a Lord over them, whatever they pretend to the contrary; *They are the wicked, and serve not God.*

CHAP. IV.

IN this Chapter, 1. The Lord confirms yet further, the difference to be betwixt the godly and the wicked, by shewing the judgements to come on the wicked, v. 1. and mercies to the godly, v. 2. and their victory over their enemies, v. 3.

3. The Prophecie is closed with an admonition to adhere to the written Word, prophecie being now to cease, v. 4. and to expect for, and mark the coming of the Messiah, which should be known by the coming of John the Baptist, v. 5. the end and efficacy of whole doctrine is held forth, v. 6.

Verse 1. **F**or behold, the day cometh that shall burne as an Oven, and the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burne them up, saith the LORD of hostes, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

The particle *for* shewes that the Lord is confirming that assertion, chap. 1. 18. of a visible difference to be betwixt the godly and the wicked. And first, for the wicked he threatens that they shall be as easily and totally consumed, as a fiery Oven burnes stubble. This was accomplished upon the body of the Jewish Nation, shortly after the first coming of Christ, when they were utterly scattered, their land wasted, and city burnt, and is also of verity in the particular judgement of every wicked man; and in the second coming of Christ, when the whole Word hath its full and final accomplishment. *Dott. 1.* Man by nature is a proud creature, and retains a stamp of Adam, and the devils sin, that would be as God; Humility is no native plant in fallen man: they are *the proud* whom God hath to do with. 2. A mans daring to hazard on wicked wayes, which the most high God hath prohibited, and guarded with sad threatenings, is a clear evidence of pride, let him otherwise appear never so humble; *the proud, and all that do wickedly*, are conjoynded, as being the same, and the latter an evidence of the former, as chap. 3. 15. See, *Psalm. 119. 21.* 3. The stoutest of creatures will prove but weak, when God reveals his justice, and deals with them in wrath; *The proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble to the fire, in the day of the Lord that cometh.* 4. The pure wrath of the living God is a dreadful thing, leaving neither hope of our-gate, nor present mitigation, but violently consumes all without recovery; *The day shall burne us as an Oven,* (where the heat is closed in, and all that is put in it shut up from

from coming out,) and shall burn them up, and leave them neither root nor branch.

Ver. 2. *But unto you that feare my Name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall go forth and grow up as Calves of the stall.*

As for the godly, he promises to send Christ unto them, bringing illumination, righteousness, healing, protection, and increase of grace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. *Doff.* 1. An infallible character of the truly godly, is their reverence and holy feare, (presumption being very contrary unto piety,) and that not only of Gods justice and terrible judgements, which the wicked may tremble at, but also of his Name, and whatsoever he reveals himself by, his Word being enough to make them tremble, *Isa* 66. 2. and his goodness to make them feare, *Hos.* 3. 1. *ye that feare my Name,* get the promise. 2. Christ is the substance of the godlies encouragement, as being unto his Church and children in a super-excellent manner, what the Sun is to this inferiour world, in enlightening all their darkness, illuminating all the inferiour lights that shine in any measure, making all hid things patent, rejoycing, warming, cherishing, and ripening all fruits; *Unto you that feare my Name, shall the Sun arise.* 3. Not only is every man by nature and without Christ, in a dark, disconsolate condition till he come unto them; but his manifestation of himself under the Law, was far inferiour to that under the Gospel, which is far more clear, glorious and comfortable, then the legal shadows were: for, where Christ comes, *the Sun riseth* after a dark night; and this especialy relates to his Incarnation, which is Sun-light in comparison of the Old Testament, which had but, as it were, Moon-light. 4. That which makes Christ especially comfortable to the godly is, that he brings glorious righteousness to them, whereby they who durst not appear before God, and are vile and monstrous, become glorious and beautiful in the eyes of the Lord; he is not only righteousness, but *the Sun of righteousness*, glorious righteousness unto them. 5. As these who get good of Christ, will have many sores, and be made to feel the deadly wounds and diseases which every one by nature hath: so Christ is the

only Physician to cure such sores, and deliver his people from all sickness of sin and misery: *He arises with healing.* 6. Christ meritoriously, and his love and providence is the sweet shelter of sinners, when pursued by their enemies; and these who would taste of his healing virtue, are to lie near this Sun, and get in under his beams and rayes, which embrace and cherish the sick till they be healed; *He hath warme wings to hide us under, and this healing is under his wings.* 7. As every man by nature is but a prisoner, and a slave to Satan and his own lusts, and lying under the power of a hard heart and spirit of bondage, and their souls are also wasted with leanness, and feeding upon the husks: so Christ being fled unto, and enjoyed, and made use of, as the soules shepherd, brings spiritual libertie, and increase of grace to make fat and flourishing, and of joy and gladnesse in the Lord; *Ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall;* who being well fed and set at liberty, do skip for joy.

Verse 3. *And ye shall tread down the wicked: for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.*

To make this difference yet more conspicuous, he not only threatens judgements against the wicked, and promises spiritual comforts to the godly, but promises to bring the wicked under the godlies feet, and to make them triumph solidly over all their enemies. *Doff.* 1. Whatever external excellencie be permitted to the wicked, yet they are, in comparison of the godly, but vile and contemptible, and will in due time appear so; they are but ashes to be tread upon by the godly. 2. Albeit the godly are oft-times lying under the feet of wicked enemies, yet not only are they even then Conquerours over all their enemies in Christ their Head, and by faith which keeps them from harm, and brings them advantage from their troubles, and makes them boast in God over all of them, and sometime get their hand over enemies even in this world, either by themselves or by others: But in due time their victory shall be compleat and visible, when they shall be set with Christ on his throne, and all the wicked made his and their foot stool; *Ye shall tread down the wicked,*

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mickall, for they shall be asher under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hostes.

Verse 4. Remember the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgements.

This Prophecie, (as also the rest, he being the last) is closed with some directions to the Church, whereof the first is, that since there was no other extraordinary Prophet to succeed him, till Christ and his fore-runner should come, and there being terrible schismes and commotions to ensue amongst them, therefore they would have recourse to the written Word, therein to seek eternal life, and instruction how to walk in Gods way, till they come to the actual possession of salvation. *Diss.*

1. The written Word of God is to be closely adhered unto, as that which will direct our course in dark times, which ought to be the rule of our faith, worship and manners, which will supply the defect of extraordinary revelations, and to which all extraordinary revelations agree, and bear witness, and will afford matter of comfort in saddest times, and for attaining these ends, the Church is to be much in the studie thereof; upon these grounds is this charge given, *Remember ye the Law of Moses.* The doctrine revealed by God to Moses, and by him to the Church, contains the substance of all that is necessary to salvation, and is the foundation of all the rest of the Scriptures, which are as a Commentary and particular application of it: upon this ground it is that they are remitted to the Law of Moses, not to seek justification by the works of the Law, nor yet only to be led by the Law to Christ, but as containing the summe of all the doctrine of the Prophets, which they would not neglect who made conscience of Moses law, as being Gods own Commentarie upon it, enjoyed as an appendice to it. 3. That the Word may have place, and be entertained with due reverence and respect, we are seriously to consider the authority of God enjoying it, *I commanded*: our obligation to it, and our honour in enjoying it, *I commanded for all Israel*, and only Israel, including other Nations: the Majestie of God at any time appearing in or about that Word, how dreadful he was in publishing it at first, what of God hath appeared in refreshments by, or judge-

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judgements, and increase according to that Word, I am
at it in a flesh with great glory: and what authority his
servants have to inculcate that Word upon us, and how much
their fidelity in duty will condemn our contempt. Remember
the Law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him. 4. Such as
these conscience of submitting to, and walking by the rule of
Gods Word, will be far from showing to themselves or others,
a liberty in some points of truth and practice, to believe or do
as they please, providing they keep right in some chief and fun-
damental things, but will be tender of the whole Will of
God, of lesser and greater Commandments, they are enjoined
to remember the ceremonial statutes and political judgements,
as well as the moral Law, and in a word, his whole do-
ctrine.

Verf. 5. Behold, I will send you Elijah the Pro-
phet, before the coming of the great and dreadful
day of the LORD.

A second direction is, earnestly to expect Christs coming,
and to prevent any mistake about it, he premonishes them,
that he would send John Baptist in the spirit and power of E-
lias, immediately before his coming. This is so clearly expound-
ed in the New Testament, Luk 1. 17. Mat. 11. 14. and 17.
11, 12. that it is high presumption to contradict it. *Doct.*
1. Christs coming in the flesh, and as a Prophet to his Church,
is not only greatly to be revered by the godly, (as when Ja-
cob had the vision, Gen: 28. 17.) but indeed terrible unto the
wicked, and may be the occasion of terrible judgements to cor-
rupt visible Churches, whose measure of sin will be filled up by
contempt of such an offer: It is the great and dreadful day of the
Lord. And so the Nation of the Jewes found it. 2. Christ is
not easily discerned when he comes to his Church, as not ap-
pearing in such a way as carnal men imagine, but may be mis-
taken and rejected, or another taken for him, which because it is
the hinge whereupon our happinesse turns, that we have Christ
indeed, and mistake him not in his manifestations, nor embrace
a delusion in his stead, therefore we would studie sure and cleare
light in this truth: Hence it is that the Lord so much guards
this, by shewing the marks of the Messiahs coming, and the B-
vangelist

ventalist Mark begins where Malachi leaves off, Mark 2. 1. Ministers who would preach repentance unto a people, and fit them for the Kingdom of Christ, ought to be men of *Eliahs* temper, for through zeal and integrity, for courage and fidelity, to resist a declining generation, to contend with the greatest decliners, and freely to reprove the sins of the time; such a one was Christs fore-runner, he was *Elisab* the Prophet, as coming in his Spirit and power, *Luke* 1. 17.

Verse 6. And he shall turne the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Johns doctrine is commended from the end of it, which is to convert the people to prevent the curse, and from the efficacy of it, that by his preaching for reformation of the Church, he shall either be instrumental to convert both elder and younger, and make an harmonie in faith amongst themselves, and with the Patriarchs their Ancestors, from whom they had so far degenerated, as that they might justly renounce them, *Isa* 63. 18. and to beget mutual love amongst them, as a sure fruit of faith; or else they, being unfit to receive and embrace Christ, the whole Nation should be ripe for the ensuing curse, and withal, that his Ministry should be blessed to convert some of all ranks, and bring them to unity in the truth and love, that the Nation be not totally rejected and destroyed, but a remnant saved. *Doct.* 1. As the Lord in mercy sends his Ministry with the doctrine of repentance, to prevent sadder messengers and messages: so a Ministry will either be effectual to convert, or ripen for ruine: It is the Lords last Word to his Church, that the lively Ministry of the Word, will either ruine the corruptions of men, or occasion mens own ruine, on whom it hath no saving effect, as here we may see. 2. True Conversion, and the fruit of the Ministry of the Word, will shew it self in making all ranks, (both the old that have lived long in a good conceit of themselves, and the young who may seem not to have gone far astray,) see need of repentance and reformation, and making use of Christ, in discovering unto men how far they have degenerated from the rule, and from the piety of Ancestors.

... glory in a carnal way; and will not
 ... of Religion; and in the
 ... the fathers to the chil-
 ... doth im-
 ... toward the world ap-
 ... however his coming was oc-
 ... promise made
 ... Word of God to
 ... the grace offered by
 ... from which
 ... let that curse
 ... Nations and visible Churches;
 ... no place,
 ... *Lest I come*
 ... such is the certification, if *Johans* Ministry had no place,
 ... and consequently Christs, whose way he prepared, *Lest I come*
 ... *As the Lord is always ef-*
 ... whom he calls and sends forth
 ... pillars to uphold a
 ... of their being fruitful
 ... moderation of a judgement on a people
 ... his zealous Ministry was a
 ... to prevent that curse on *Judea*,
 ... and the Apostles, was a
 ... of that Nation from the curse,
 ... and lump of that Na-
 ... Even so come, LORD
 JESUS, Amen.

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